

ABSTRACT

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FACTORS AFFECTING INSTITUTION SELECTION FOR UNDERGRADUATE GATES MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS

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College enrollment is experiencing an upward trend; however, the quality of institutions selected by minority students remains a question. Promising minority students are failing to select high quality colleges and universities, despite academic components that would leave them otherwise qualified for admission. In fact, nearly 80% of high academic achieving low-income, minority students under match when selecting a college or university (Obama & Obama, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors leading to selection of institution for Gates Millennium Scholars while examining the relationship between college selection and socioeconomic status, cost, high school grade point average (GPA), family support, need for achievement, self efficacy, persistence, advisement, and technology for Gates Millennium Scholars. Pearson Correlation was utilized to examine survey data collected from 87 Gates Millennium Scholars. The implications of collection selection for low- income, minority students are significant in understanding the needs of

this highly diverse student population. This study sought to identify the variables that significantly impact college selection for low-income minority students.

FACTORS AFFECTING INSTITUTION SELECTION FOR UNDERGRADUATE
GATES MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS

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BY

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aspiration of obtaining a college degree has become synonymous with achieving the American Dream. Consequently, the percentage of students making the immediate transition from high school to college has risen. While varying institution types and ease of access to federal aid have made immediate college enrollment attainable, the percentage of students who successfully complete a degree program has only slightly changed. Moreover, minority students in particular have continuously lagged in both traditional college enrollment and degree completion rates despite their continuous belief in the value of an education and its power for transforming lives. Thus, the focus has shifted from developing a student's desire to attend college, to the development of a clear path for degree completion, particularly for underrepresented, low income, and minority students. Even the highest achieving low-income students are less likely to attend college than more affluent students. This discrepancy increases greatly when comparing college graduation rates between high achieving low-income minority students and nonminority affluent students.

In 1990, the percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in college was 70% (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2015). Of the three million high school completers in 2013, two million or 66% enrolled in college the following fall. Particularly for African-American and Hispanic students, these numbers are

nearly 20% lower than their Caucasian counterparts despite continuous growth throughout the years. Specifically, the enrollment of African-Americans in higher education has increased from 1976 to 2012. In these years, enrollment rose from 10% to 15% (NCES, 2015). Despite these trends of increased enrollment, graduation rates of minority students, particularly African-American minorities continue to lag behind other races.

In the 2011-2012 Academic year, 59% of Caucasian students graduated from high school. During this same academic year, 18% and 16% of Hispanic and African-American students graduated (NCES, 2015). To further exacerbate these disparities, of the Caucasian students graduating in the 2011-2012 academic year, 58% of these students enrolled in college in 2012 (NCES, 2015); 19% of Hispanic students enrolled in college in the 2012 year. Of the African-American students graduating from high school, only 14% of these students enrolled in college (NCES, 2015). Although these data may not seem to be news, graduation rates for minorities represent the largest gap in education related statistics. Of the total number of college attending Caucasian students enrolled, 69% of students graduate. This story changes dramatically when considering graduation rates of minority students (NCES, 2015). These statistics prompt discussion on what initiatives should be in place to recruit and retain African-American and other minority students (NCES, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The term “under matching” is fairly new, but has gained significant attention in recent years. Under matching refers to highly qualified students attending nonselective

colleges and universities (Obama & Obama, 2014). Many of these students are more than qualified to attend high ranking and highly selective colleges and universities; however, these students often do not apply for the selective schools despite affirmative action in admissions and the availability of generous financial aid packages. As a whole, 41% of all college bound student under match in their postsecondary choice (Obama & Obama, 2014). This number drastically increases when considering high achieving minority students. According to this same report, nearly 80% of high academic achieving, low-income, minority students under match. This report found that not only are low-income, minority students more likely to under match, they are most likely to attend a college or university at least two selectivity levels below the level of college selectivity to which a student likely has access (Obama & Obama, 2014).

The issue of under matching is extremely important when considering the experiences of minority students. Although there is no credible evidence of the long term affects of college mismatch using a national sample of undergraduate students, generally it can be understood that highly selective colleges and universities have access to a greater amount of financial and other related resources. These resources are available to the students attending that college or university. In addition, highly selective colleges and universities have higher graduation rates for minority students, regardless of socioeconomic status (NCES, 2010a). The tendency to under match may also have an impact on a student's perceived level of satisfaction, engagement, and social development. This study sought to examine the issue of under match to discern the causes and implications selection of a college had on the overall development of the student.

The college ranking system serves as a means to measure the quality of educational institutions. These measures primarily fall into seven categories including: undergraduate academic reputation, graduation and retention rates, faculty resources (including class size), student selectivity (based on standardized test and grade point average), financial resources, alumni giving, and graduation rate performance (Morse, 2015). These indicators include measurements of the quality of students, faculty, and staff at the institution and serve as a reliable indicator of the quality and results of education the institution provides (Morse, 2015) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Ranking Indicator Weights

Ranking Indicator	Regional Universities and Regional Colleges
Undergraduate Academic Reputation	22.5%
Student Selectivity for the entering class	12.5%
Faculty Resources	20.0%
Graduation and Retention Rates	22.5%
Financial Resources	10.0%
Alumni Giving	5.0%
Graduation Rate	7.5%
Total	100.0%

(Source: Morse, 2015)

For the purposes of this study, the school ranking system was simplified to consider only the endowment fund of colleges and universities. Secondary school ranking criteria included: acceptance rate, average graduation rate, institution reputation,

and institutional resources. These rankings were considered when designating a school as high tier, middle tier, and low tier. Data indicating the endowment of each college and university as well as graduation rates can be obtained directly from the institution's website. It is the opinion of the researcher that these indicators provide a clear and concise picture of the quality of education received at various institutions and a means by which schools can easily be classified.

The Gates Millennium Scholarship

To alleviate the disparities in the college admission and attendance rates between Caucasian and other racial and ethnic minorities, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation established the Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program in 1999. The goal of this program is to establish a cadre of future leaders by improving access to and success in higher education for low income, high achieving minority students in the United States by providing them with scholarships and other forms of support (DesJardins & McCall, 2008). Students are selected based on high school grade point average, extracurricular activities, volunteer work, writing ability, academic recommendations, and other pre-specified criteria set by the program (DesJardins & McCall, 2008). The purpose of this study was to not only examine the Gates Millennium Scholarship and the structure of opportunity created for minority students, but to also understand the impact of this scholarship on the school selection for Gates Millennium Scholars.

The Gates Millennium Scholarship was created to attract underprivileged minority students. Many of the students selected for the scholarship are students from unimaginable circumstance who have proven themselves academically despite their

socioeconomic status. A majority of the students selected for this scholarship are raised in nontraditional homes including single parent homes, group homes, and with grandparents. These nontraditional circumstances will provide pertinent background and a framework for this study. Specifically, this study sought to understand the factors that influence college selection for Gates Millennium Scholars.

More than 4,000 students apply for the Gates Millennium Scholarship program each year. Of these students, 1,000 are selected to receive the scholarship. This study sought to determine whether the Gates Millennium Scholars program's method of identifying talent and providing financial support has the effect of extending opportunity and ensuring student success during the transition to college despite odds that typically confront low-income minority students. With employment trends demanding that students receive a quality education to remain competitive in the 21 century, this study sought to understand the true impact of the Gates Millennium Scholarship on providing opportunities for minorities that would have otherwise been unattainable.

The Gates Millennium Scholarship has improved access to postsecondary education and has enabled degree attainment for high achieving, low income, and minority students. Despite these advancements toward educational equality, minority students receiving the Gates Millennium Scholarship are under matching in the area of school choice.

Recently, new trends in college selection have developed for middle-class parents and high school seniors. Importance has been placed on selecting a "safety school" or a backup in case the student is not accepted at the top choice institution. In fact, this trend is now a seemingly permanent part of the higher education lexicon regarding college

admission. Further trends suggest that the safety school is often the first choice for minority students, if college is a choice at all (Williams, 2015). Studies suggest that African-American college bound students are more likely to seek out colleges and universities in their immediate vicinity or where students from their high school are attending. Studies also suggest a tendency for African-American students to select schools with a high African-American student population (Williams, 2015). These findings have also been supported by previous research completed on several cohorts of Gates Millennium scholars. The primary focus for this study is scholars enrolling in the 2008 and 2009 academic year (cohorts 7 and 8). Additional classes of interest are cohorts 2 and 3, which include students enrolled as freshmen in the fall of 2001 and 2002, respectively (see Table 2).

Table 2

Gates Millennium Cohort 2 and 3 College Selection Data

	Total Enrolled Scholars	Percent Enrolled at Top 10 U.S.
		Institutions in Academic Year 2001-2002
Cohort 2	483	8%
Cohort 3	664	6%

(Source: American Institutes for Research, *Delivering on the Promise*, 2009)

In the 2001 Gates Millennium Scholar Cohort, there were 483 first-year students selected for participation in the program. Of these students, 8% enrolled in top 10 U.S. institutions (as defined by *U.S. News and World Report*). In the 2002 Gates Millennium

Scholar Cohort there were 664 total scholars (American Institutes for Research, Delivering on the Promise, 2009). Six percent of the incoming first-year students enrolled in tier 1 institutions represents a decline in selection of these institutions for enrollment of first year scholars (American Institutes for Research, Delivering on the Promise, 2009). Roughly 12% of Cohort 7 and 8 Scholars attended Top 10 U.S. institutions (American Institutes for Research, Delivering on the Promise, 2009). Since the program's inception in 2001, the institutions most commonly attended by Gates Millennium Scholars are considered Research Universities according to the Carnegie Classification System and/or Tier 1 schools according to the *U.S. News and World Report* ranking system (American Institutes for Research, Delivering on the Promise, 2009) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3

Gates Millennium Scholar College Ranking for Cohorts 7 and 8

	Gates Millennium	Gates Millennium
Top Ten U.S. Institutions	Cohort 7	Cohort 8
Harvard University	21	22
Princeton University	9	5
Yale University	12	20
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	20	14
Stanford University	33	22
California Institute of Technology	1	0
University of Pennsylvania	8	6
Columbia University	11	9
Duke University	9	12

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

	Gates Millennium	Gates Millennium
Top Ten U.S. Institutions	Cohort 7	Cohort 8
University of Chicago	3	5
Total Scholar Enrollment	127	115
Percentage of Cohort Enrolled in Top 10 US Institutions	12.9%	11.5

(Source: 2009 *U.S. News and World Report Rankings*; American Institutes for Research, 2009)

Table 4

U. S. News and World Report Rankings, 2009

2008-2009 Top GMS Institutions	Cohort 7 and 8 Enrollment
University of California-Berkley	82
Stanford University	55
University of California Los Angeles	55
University of Texas at Austin	46
Harvard University	43
Texas A & M University	36
University of Florida	35
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	34
Yale University	32
Brown University	31
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill	27

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

2008-2009 Top GMS Institutions	Cohort 7 and 8 Enrollment
University of Oklahoma Norman Campus	26
University of Washington	25
University of New Mexico Main Campus	24
Arizona State University Main	23
University of California, San Diego	22
Duke University	21
Columbia University in the City of New York	20
Cornell University	20
Spelman College	20
Northern Arizona University	19
University of Miami	19
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	19
University of South California	19
Dartmouth College	18
Georgetown University	17
Baylor University	16
New York University	15

(Source: American Institutes for Research, Delivering on the Promise, 2009)

The greatest numbers of institutions attended by Gates Millennium Scholars are classified as Tier 1 institutions; however, a significant amount of scholars attend tier 2 and tier colleges and universities (American Institutes for Research, *Delivering on the Promise*, 2009). Evaluation of this data suggests that the Gates Millennium Scholar program may not be making a noteworthy impact on institution choice for Scholars. What factors influence Gates Millennium Scholar selection of institution? Although the schools attended are among the finest institutions, particularly for research, it is alarming that more scholars are not seizing on the opportunity to attend the highest ranked schools. Trends also suggest a tendency for scholar clustering, or attendance of a high number of scholars at one institution.

Despite trends in cohorts 2, 3, 7, and 8 attending top GMS and/or top 10 U.S. institutions, these cohorts represent less than half of the total scholar population. The majority of the remaining scholar population attends less competitive colleges and universities throughout the United States (American Institutes for Research, *Delivering on the Promise*, 2009). Considering the scholastic aptitude required to receive such an academically rigorous scholarship, it may be plausible that the schools selected for attendance by a large majority of Gates Millennium Scholars may not be the most opportune both financially and academically.

What factors influence selection of an institution for Gates Millennium Scholars? Scholar notification of scholarship receipt is likely a factor in college selection. Additional contributing factors may include the likelihood that African-American and other minority students are likely the first in their families to go to college, students desire to be close to home, and students desire to be surrounded by other students with

similar racial and ethnic experiences; 53% of low-income, high achieving students do not apply to a single selective college (Jaschik, 2012). Many of these students also apply to at least one college that is not selective at all (Jaschik, 2012). Overall these students are more likely to apply to a single nonselective college and one moderately selective college. More than half of these students do not have a single application sent to what might be considered a “reach” college (Jaschik, 2012). Simply put, many students with the appropriate grades and capabilities are not even trying to get in.

A number of factors contribute to the nation’s low college completion rates. Greatest among these is the high cost of attendance. According to a report released in December 2008 by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, the average tuition at a four-year private institution is equal to 76% of the median family income in the United States (American Institutes for Research, Delivering on the Promise, 2009). This report also noted that while college tuition and fees rose by 439% between 1982 and 2007, income rose only by 147% (American Institutes for Research, Delivering on the Promise, 2009). These figures do not begin to scratch the surface when considering low-income students. These results indicate that college has become less affordable for many students and almost impossible for the most disadvantaged students effectively reducing access to higher education and the opportunity to pursue enrollment at the nation’s most selective and well-respected colleges and universities. It is no coincidence that these schools are among the most expensive. This study examined these trends to understand how college selection prior to receiving the Gates Millennium Scholarship might have impacted the final institution selection after obtaining the scholarship.

Despite tendencies to shy away from highly ranked colleges and universities, significant advancements have been made by many of the highest ranking colleges and universities to improve accessibility for high achieving, low-income students. Columbia, Yale, Harvard, and other top institutions have recently reduced the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) for low- and middle-income families to eliminate the need for student loans (Foster, 2015). At Harvard, the income threshold for families not required to make a family contribution rose from \$40,000 to \$70,000 for the incoming class of 2010 (Foster, 2010). Still, additional tier 1 universities are developing major enhancements to grant aid, eliminating student loans, and removing equity from financial aid calculations. In fact, Harvard's "Zero to 10 percent Standard" reduces the cost of attendance for families with incomes below \$180,000 (Sillers, 2015). At Yale, the total available scholarship funds for the class of 2012 were \$24.2 million (American Institutes for Research, Delivering on the Promise, 2009). This number increased more than 45% from the 2011 academic year (American Institutes for Research, Delivering on the Promise, 2009). Such an astronomical amount of financial excess begs the question, why aren't the best and brightest low-income students taking full advantage of these opportunities? Figure 1 shows the average tuition and fees for the top 10 ranked colleges.

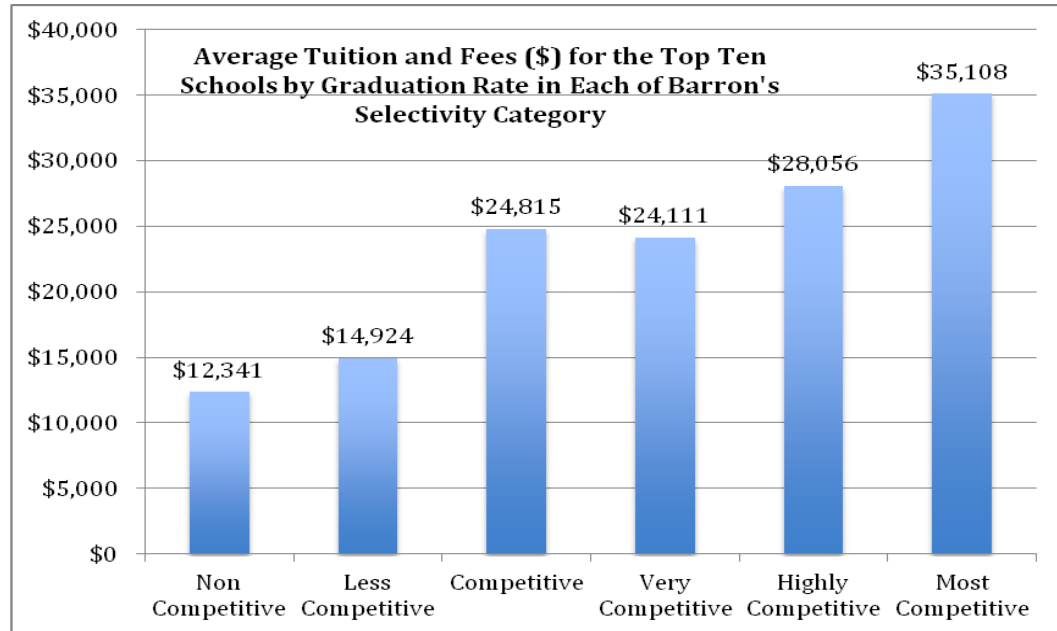


Figure 1: Average tuition and fees for top ten ranked colleges.

(Source: American Institutes for Research Delivering on the Promise, 2009)

Graduation rates are also an area of concern. The racial gap within graduation studies demonstrates a huge disparity (see Table 5). According to Education Department data, 47% of students who receive Pell grants, a federal student aid program for low-income students, graduate within six years (Casselmann, 2014). Still, this number is higher than African-American college graduation rates. Specifically for institutions ranked among the tier 1 colleges and universities, these numbers are significantly less daunting. Still, questions remain. If schools ranked among the tier 1 institutions collectively graduate more than 80% of their minority students, why then are students not selecting these institutions as their top choices?

Table 5

Demographic Data for Top 10 Ranked Colleges and Universities

	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic
University	Graduates	Graduates	Graduates
Harvard	98%	94%	95%
Stanford	96%	93%	95%
Yale University	98%	98%	97%
Massachusetts Inst.	94%	83%	88%
Stanford University	98%	91%	93%
California Institute of Technology	85%	100%	80%
University of Pennsylvania	97%	92%	92%
Columbia University	92%	91%	92%
Duke University	95%	92%	93%
University of Chicago	92%	80%	86%

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors leading to selection of institution for Gates Millennium Scholars. The study examined the relationship between socioeconomic status, cost, high school GPA, family support, need for achievement, self-efficacy, persistence, advisement, and technology for Gates Millennium Scholars. The implications of this study include creating a more fulfilling and academically appropriate experience for high achieving minority students. This study hoped to determine barriers effecting selection of highly ranked institutions and the implications institution selection

may have on future career, professional, and educational pursuits of Gates Millennium Scholars.

The purpose of this study was not to prevent all cases of under match, nor was it to insist all students should attend tier 1 institutions. Instead, the purpose of this study was to understand the factors that impact low income, minority student selection of colleges and universities. This study sought to contribute to the body of research that has previously been conducted and to assist colleges and universities with understanding the needs of this population of students and to identify a means for recruitment of highly qualified, minority, and low-income students.

College selection has an impact on student outcomes. Educational leaders are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring students receive the necessary information to select the best college or university for their academic and future professional needs. It is the opinion of the researcher that this study will shed light on the idea of under match for low-income minority students and provide a blue print for improvement that can be used by educational leaders, colleges and universities, and all stakeholders tasked with the responsibility of ensuring student outcomes.

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to guide this study and were developed with consideration to the statement of the problem and the purpose of this study. These questions were designed to gather information regarding the influence of the Gates Millennium Scholarship on the college selection process from both a

quantitative and qualitative perspective. The central qualitative research question of this study was the following:

- How do Gates Millennium Scholars describe the primary factors that influenced their college selection choice?

Quantitative research questions that guided this study include:

- RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and socioeconomic status?
- RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the cost of attendance?
- RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the advisement (from parents, teachers, counselors, and other stakeholders) that scholars receive prior to selection of a college?
- RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's level of self-efficacy?
- RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's need for achievement?
- RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's high school GPA?
- RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the recruitment process of highly selective colleges and universities?

Additional questions were designed to further examine the central qualitative research question:

- RQ8: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and student use of technology?
- RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and family support?
- RQ10: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and their commitment to persist?
- RQ 11: What common themes emerged among Gates Millennium Scholars related to satisfaction of college selection?

A mixed-methods research question combines both aspects of the qualitative and quantitative aspects of this study. The mixed-methods question addressed by this study was:

- In what ways do the data obtained from surveys obtained from Gates Millennium Scholars regarding the relationship between receiving the Gates Millennium Scholarship and college selection help to explain the trends identified regarding selection of attendance at non top 10 U.S. institutions?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for a variety of reasons. Assumptions are made about what influences the college selection choice. Particularly for minority students, this area of study deserves greater attention and understanding. Several studies in the past have focused on factors such as parental involvement, exposure, and ethnicity; however, little

is known about how these factors influence college selection choices for African-American students or other minority populations in general. College guidebooks such as “Fiske Guide to Colleges” and “The Princeton Review: The Complete Book of Colleges” continue to report great strides in sales; however, there is little information regarding how many students make their college selection based on such rational basis (Machung, 1995). College is big business and undoubtedly, the ranking system is a permanent part of the collegiate system. Very little research exists to support the idea that this ranking system and other related factual information is of use in the college decision-making process in this century. This study is not only useful for the colleges ranked as tier 1 institutions, but is also useful for all selective colleges and universities. This study examines the factors that impact college selection of low income, minority students and will empower all institutional types by informing and providing education on the factors that influence this highly sought after population of students.

Current research is limited. This paucity of available research regarding the usefulness of the ranking system in student’s selection of colleges and universities leads numerous institutions to make assumptions regarding the overall importance of the ranking system and any related influence of this system on college selection. Specifically for Gates Millennium Scholars, no study exists to examine the relationship between college selection and effecting factors for the Gates Millennium Scholarship program. This study will add to the limited research currently available on student use of publicized ranking systems in national magazines and will provide the Gates Millennium Scholarship program and other institutions with valuable information about factors that influence college selection and related patterns. Additionally, college administrators will

have access to data related to college exposure and recruitment trends that may lend to the selection of colleges and universities by Gates Millennium scholars and support the clustering trends observed in previous Gates Millennium Scholar research (American Institutes for Research, Delivering on the Promise, 2009).

Summary

Selection for the Gates Millennium Scholarship program is a highly challenging process with potential to pay off in dividends if selected. The ability to fund the undergraduate degree is an opportunity that most undergraduate students can only dream of. In addition, the Gates Millennium Scholarship program provides the means to support continued education and professional advancement through the doctoral degree. Despite this ability, students are failing to select highly ranked institutions across all academic levels. Many Gates scholars select schools that are not selective at all. Why are promising students with advanced academic ability failing to select amongst the highest ranked colleges and universities? What can institutions of higher education do to recruit Gates Millennium Scholars in order to reverse these trends, particularly with African-American students?

Although a large number of the colleges and universities selected for attendance by Gates Millennium Scholars are considered Research I institutions, it is the opinion of the researcher that the reasons for student college selection be explored in hopes that appropriate interventions regarding exposure and advisement can be implemented. College selection can significantly impact the future career and professional development of Gates Millennium Scholar and other minority students. Selection of an institution that

is not the proper fit for a student may also impact the student's graduation outcomes and persistence through the Gates Millennium Scholarship program. Chapter II examines the research literature regarding school selection and its relationship to socioeconomic status, cost, high school GPA, family support, need for achievement, self efficacy, persistence, advisement, and technology for Gates Millennium Scholars.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents the review of recent educational literature directed to high school students and college selection. The focus of this chapter is to review literature related to college selection, persistence, institutional resources, and literature related to the college experience of low-income minority students. In addition, literature was reviewed related to the cost of attendance and its impact on minority students in their desire to attend and persist through an undergraduate program. The review of the literature will provide bases for the study by providing a synthesis to relevant and current research sources. In addition, historical studies and relevant data will also be used as background for the study.

Organization of the Review

The review is organized in five parts:

- First, traditional information related to college selection will be reviewed.
- Second, the relationship between college selection, cost, and socioeconomic status will be examined.
- Third, college selection and its relationship with high school grade point average, student need for achievement, and student level of self-efficacy will be examined.
- Fourth, college selection and its relationship to persistence will be examined.

- Lastly, college selection and its relationship with advisement from parents, teachers, counselors, and other stakeholders will be examined and the review concludes with a summary.

Dependent Variable—College Selection

Historical Overview

College selection is a difficult process, particularly for minority students who may not have access to the advisement or resources necessary to select the highest quality college or university. According to Cabrera and Nasa (2000) the college selection process begins around seventh grade and can be divided into three stages: predisposition to attend college, the general college search process, and the college choice process (Cabrera & Nasa, 2000). Advisement from parents, socioeconomic status, and student access and exposure to information about college, shape the students aspirations for college and their academic direction including grade point average and standardized test scores (Cabrera & Nasa, 2000). The outcomes of this performance determine the student's probability of college attendance.

As students make the commitment to attend college they begin to align their actions with their intentions to pursue higher education. These actions are often influenced by factors including career aspirations, social class, academic aptitude, advisement from parents and other stakeholders, and their academic goals (Cabrera & Nasa, 2000). In making this decision, institutional characteristics and financial implications of their college selection played a significant role. Previous research on college selection has been focused heavily on student ability to pay. Although Gates

Millennium Scholars are generally Pell Grant eligible students who receive a fully funded academic scholarship, many of these students begin making their college selection prior to receiving notification of receipt of the award. By the time a student receives the scholarship they have often already selected an institution. Based on their ability to pay, these students often attend schools that are cheaper and less selective.

Understanding factors that influence a student's selection of a college is critical for colleges and universities. These selection choices are the bread that sustain the college and university system and serve as the "lifeblood of colleges and universities" (Kinzie et al., 2004). As various types of schools are developing everyday, competition for students is continually growing. Although research suggests that high academic achieving students are more likely to attend selective colleges and universities, this trend does not represent the reality of minority students (Kinzie et al., 2004).

Many studies have been conducted on the importance of persistence in the college framework. Little is known about the factors influencing a student's desire and subsequent actions necessary to select a college. This is problematic as college represents a time in which students will transition and experience significant growth as they explore new ideas, concepts, and experiences. Improper fit or "mismatching" may impair the student's ability to reach their academic and professional growth, and in some cases, prevent the student from completing their educational pursuits. The college selection experience will sometimes challenge the ideas and morals the student has prior to entering college. To better understand the changes a student will face in their matriculation from high school to college it is important to understand several theories

that may impact not only a student's desire to attend a particular school, but also the student's success when enrolled.

Models of College Selection

Chapman (1981) was among the first to develop a model describing student college choice. This model described the influences affecting a student's decision to not only attend college, but to select which college he or she would like to attend. The model was intended to assist college administrators, specifically recruitment officers and other administrators responsible for development of recruitment policy, to identify the pressures and influences that are involved with a student's college selection process (Chapman, 1981). Chapman's theory identified two underlying factors that guide a student's college selection, personal characteristics and external influences. External factors include stakeholders in the student's personal and academic life, institutional characteristics identified by the student, and the institution's efforts to recruit and communicate with the student (Chapman, 1981). Student characteristics involved four distinct categories: socioeconomic status, educational aspirations, aptitude, and high school performance (Chapman, 1981).

Chapman (1986) later refined and redeveloped his theory regarding college selection based on findings from previous research. Chapman (1986) developed a model describing student's movement as they progress toward selection of a college or university. The stages in the 1986 model are Pre-Search Behavior, Search Behavior, Application Decision, Choice Decision, and Matriculation Decision. This theory is based on the assumption that college selection consists of search and choice components

(Chapman, 1986). In this theory, search refers to searching for the attribute values, which characterize colleges (Chapman, 1986). Simply stated, search refers to the student's action of categorizing colleges and universities by specific characteristics they deem important. This search criterion may include cost, academic quality, future career prospects and opportunities (upon graduation), quality of life while a student at the college, and related considerations that might be of interest to students in the ultimate college choice decision (Chapman, 1986). The search phase is concluded when a student decides on the set of colleges to which formal application for admission will be submitted.

To further expound on college selection research, Hossler and Gallagher (1987) developed their college selection model based on three phases. This model became the most widely recognized and utilized model regarding college choice. The three phases in this model include the predisposition phase, search phase, and choice phase (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). In the predisposition phase students consider their options and make a decision regarding plans after graduation. In this phase, students determine if they will actually pursue higher education after high school (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). For students deciding to attend college, they begin college information on college and universities of interest. In the search phase, students begin narrowing their college choices and select a narrowed list of possible "choice" institutions (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Students will actually apply to their choice schools and make their admissions decisions based on the results of these applications. In the third and final phase, the choice phase, admitted students will make their final enrollment and matriculation decision (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

From their research, Hossler and Gallagher (1987) identified several factors that influence a student's final selection of a college or university. These factors include student individual preferences, characteristics and attributes of the institution and the recruitment relationship between the student and the college or university. This courtship includes availability of financial aid award and other recruitment strategies. Hossler and Gallagher revealed that this initial face is the most critical time affecting a student's decision to enroll; however, they also determined that the student's final decision was largely determined by perceived quality and image of the institution. In contrast, Maguire and Lay (1981) explored the importance of continuous involvement and a hands on approach from the institution during the admission and selection process. Their research explored the difference continuous "courtship" throughout the process until the final decision has been made has on a student's selection. Maguire and Lay describe this "courtship" as a critical component that creates the foundation of institutional image in the decision-making phases of college selection. Simply put, exposure to the institution is not enough to significantly impact a student's college choice. The institution must be proactive and involved in order to impact the student's selection.

According to St. John, Paulsen, and Starkey (1996), college selection research has been largely focused on student econometric analyses. Many students select colleges based on their analysis of the cost of the institution and potential earnings once they have received their degree. This suggests that students select colleges and universities based on the human capital theory. This theory suggest that students place stock in the knowledge, habits, social, and personality attributes including creativity, embodied in the ability to perform labor to produce economic value (Wood & Harris, 2015). Simply put,

students see college as a necessary investment in their personal, career, and professional development that will ensure their future economic stability. Within this context, college selection is based on a framework of net-utility, or a student's belief that their institution will provide the greatest potential value for their earning and desired economic stability (Wood & Harris, 2015).

Holland's person-environment fit theory suggests that the choice of a college or career field is an expression of one's personality (Smart, Feldman, & Ethington, 2006). This theory further states that most people can be classified by their resemblance to six personality types (realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional) based on their attitude, interests, and abilities (Smart et al., 2006). Holland's theory places equal emphasis on individual attributes and academic environments in efforts to understand student success in postsecondary education (Smart et al., 2006).

Understanding the relationship between students and their environment is not a new concept. This concept dates back to Plato's principle of Specialization, which assigned people with specific temperaments and abilities to jobs that matched their specific characteristics (Tinsley, 2000). In the 20th century, Patterson and Daryl (cited in Tinsley, 2000) discussed models of vocational choice and established usefulness of personal environment fit models in vocational psychology. William Cross (1991) developed the Nigrescence model as a representation of the various stages individuals experience as they become Black oriented. Through this model, research has shown that the worldview, ideology, or value system changes as individuals go through the stages of Nigrescence (Cross, 1991). Through this revelation, Cross revised his original model of Nigrescence to describe the transformation from preexisting (non-Afro centric) identity to

an Afro centric identity (Cross, 1991). The current model of Nigresence consists of five stages: Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion/Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization Commitment (Cross, 1976).

During the Pre-encounter Stage, individuals downplay the importance of race in their lives and focus on their membership in other groups (religion, social class, and sexual orientation). Individuals in this stage may also consider race-based characteristics as an insignificant component of their daily lives. Others may see race as a problem that is linked to issue of social discrimination. The Encounter Stage focuses on an encounter that causes an individual to challenge their current feels about themselves and their interpretation of the condition of African-American people in America. During this stage, an individual may encounter a blatant racial event or understand unequal treatment of African-American people. Despite the type of experience, the encounter experience is one in which the individual finds to be foreign and challenging to the previously held worldview.

In the Immersion-Emersion Stage, individuals immerse themselves in “Blackness” and feel liberated (Marks, Settles, Cooke, Morgan, & Sellers, 2004). These individuals have positive experiences related to the experience of culture associated with African-American people and a negative view of things associated with Caucasian people (Marks et al., 2004). Although these individuals have a great desire to be immersed in Black culture, they have not fully committed to a black identity. The fourth stage of the Nigresence model is described as a psychological change in which an individual learns to balance their blackness with other cultural demands (other group memberships) (Marks et al., 2004). The final stage, Internalization-Commitment, presents a contrast to previous

stages. In this stage individuals begin to live in accordance with the new self-image they have developed (Marks et al., 2004). Essentially, this model represents one explanation for the decision to attend a non-selective college or university with a high representation of African-American students. Perhaps these students seek to immerse in a culture in which they are more familiar and have not yet reached the stage of balance in which the student can successfully manage memberships in various groups.

Independent Variables

Socioeconomic Status and College Selection

Socioeconomic status is thought of as the social standing or class of a group that is measured by education, income, and occupation. Socioeconomic status provides the basis for our exposure to others who share our identity and lived experiences. This status also provides the basis for our natural skills and competencies. Research studies published by the College Board suggest a direct relationship between socioeconomic status and college admission test. Additional research completed by Radford (2013) examined the college selection process for 900 high school valedictorians. This study examined the admission and application process for all 900 students to determine if students applied to highly selective colleges, were granted admission, and which students matriculated in to highly selective colleges and universities.

Socioeconomic status encompasses more than the total family income. For low income student's poverty is a complex web of many disadvantages (Huston & Bentley, 2010). Further enhancing these disadvantages, many minority students are limited on the quality of schools they can attend largely due to their socioeconomic status. These

students live in unprivileged neighborhood with unprivileged schools. These schools often offer less qualified teachers, little to no books and other resources, limited academic course offerings, and subpar curriculum. These qualities are commonly found in underprivileged schools and can greatly impact students under preparation for college and career beyond high school. Many poor parents want their child to succeed, yet they do not have the tools or resources to assist their child in pursuit of academic excellence. Their parental involvement is often limited by other responsibilities such as balancing working long hours and balancing the operation of the home. This fact should not be seen as evidence that they do not care or wish to be involved (Epstein, 1983).

Surveys show that most parents want guidance from their child's school regarding ways they can help their child learn better (Epstein, 1986). Parents look to schools for help even when they are not able to act in their child's best interest in person. Despite this desire, low-income students are limited by family life that leaves very little free time for their parents or other caregivers. These students are often at risk for falling behind, failing to graduate, or otherwise becoming forgotten (Smith, 1995). These students are also more likely to have negative school related experiences involving teachers, administration, or other challenges related to their home life and socioeconomic status (Smith, 1995).

The research conducted by Radford (2013) uncovered evidence that supports a relationship between college selection and socioeconomic status. More than three quarters of valedictorians from high socioeconomic status applied to at least one highly selective college or university. In contrast, 59% of middle socioeconomic status valedictorians and 50% of low socioeconomic status valedictorians applied to at least one

high selective college or university. Similar disparities exist in enrollment and matriculation rates.

Lower graduation rates for low income, minority students can be partially explained by these students' lessened access and exposure that provide the backbone for many college-going students. These students have less financial means and resources to meet the demanding nature of the collegiate lifestyle (Mortenson, 1997). Financial deficiencies negatively impact the student's ability to be successful within their new environment (Lynch, 2014). Many of these students are simply lost or overwhelmed in the shuffle of the college environment because they do not have educated parents who can help them navigate the educational system (Lynch, 2014). Still, many other students are lost along the way as they attempt to work while attending college to assist with their college expenses. Despite many of these students receiving financial aid, they are still unable to make ends meet without other means of income, thus increasing their likelihood of failing to complete their degree program.

Cost and College Selection

The cost of obtaining a degree has a strong influence on selection of a college or university. Previous research has shown that factors associated with labor market challenges have led to greater enrollment and attendance in college (Betts & McFarland, 1995). A study conducted by Kern (2000) showed that when examining the college process for high school students nearly 83% of students reported financial aid as an integral consideration in selection of a college. A survey conducted by *USA Today* examined 193,000 first-time, full-time freshmen at 283 four-year colleges and

universities. This study found 66.6% of the students believed that the current economic conditions significantly affected their choice of college (Marklein, 2013); 43.3% of these students said “the cost of attending this college” was very important in their college selection (Marklein, 2013). Even more telling, 13.4% of these students said not being able to afford their first choice institution was a very important reason in deciding where to enroll (Marklein, 2013).

The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) is a survey that hundreds of campuses administer to their students each year. Satisfaction assessments enable colleges and universities to analyze areas of weakness and opportunity that need improvement from the student’s perspective. This survey spearheads the development of planning and intervention initiatives designed to improve the student experience, including academic, financial, and customer service related areas. In addition to more than 70 questions related to a student’s satisfaction with the college or university, the survey also has questions related to the student’s decision to enroll (Noel-Levitz, 2012). In the 2012 National Research Report, Levitz included data from the 2011 surveying of more than 55,000 students from 100 public and private four year and two-year institutions (Noel-Levitz, 2012). These students rated factors related to their decision to enroll on a scale of one (meaning not important at all) to seven (very important). This survey provided pertinent information as it identifies several key areas related to college selection and choice. The Noel Levitz survey identified cost and financial aid among the top enrollment factors across all institution types. These factors played a critical roll in influencing the student’s decision to enroll (Noel-Levitz, 2012).

The Noel Levitz survey was based on students who completed the Student Satisfaction Inventory during the fall 2011 academic year at colleges and universities nationwide (Noel-Levitz, 2012). The focus of the data was retrieved from fall semester because this is time when enrollment factors were likely to be most current in student's minds, particularly first year students. This survey examines and compares first year's students and students who have been enrolled two or more years. This study also examined students who identified as attending their first choice and students who were attending an alternate choice (Noel-Levitz, 2012). Factors influencing attendance at the first and alternate choice were not examined in the survey.

The Noel Levitz survey indicated that cost was the most dominant factor for students enrolled in a public four year and two year institution (Noel-Levitz, 2012). For students enrolling at private four-year institutions financial aid ranked as the top issue influencing enrollment decisions (Noel-Levitz, 2012). These findings indicate a clear relationship between institutional cost (including financial aid availability) and a student's selection of a college or university. For academically advanced students who have generally made the decision to attend college in the early part of their high school experience, this may lead a student to seek schools that are more affordable or schools that traditional financial aid options will cover.

High School Grade Point Average and College Selection

Class rank, high school grade point average, and standardized test performance have been shown to predict college success (Arbona, 1990). Bryson, Smith, and Vineyard (2002) found that specifically for African-American students, high school grade

point average (GPA) was a positive predictor of college success. Comparatively, standardized test scores appear to be predictors of college success for Caucasian students (Bryson et al., 2002). These academic factors can also be utilized to predict a student's desire to attend college, and to predict the institutional type a student might be interested in attending.

A 2014 report by *U.S. News and World Report* found that despite entering high school at the top of their classes, many high-performing low-income, minority students finish with lower grades and lower standardized exam scores than their high-achieving Caucasian, high socioeconomic status peers. A report posted by the Education Trust in 2014 also indicated racial and socioeconomic gaps in terms of students' GPAs (Bidwell, 2014). This report showed that high-achieving African-American and Latino students were significantly more likely to have C averages than their Caucasian peers (Bidwell, 2014). This report also showed that nearly three quarters of high-achieving African-American students have a B average or lower, compared to little more than half of Caucasian students (Bidwell, 2014). Simply stated, African-American and minority students are significantly less likely to have higher GPAs than their non-minority and advantaged peers.

The achievement gap refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students (National Education Association [NEA], 2008). According to the National Education Association, the achievement gap accounts for differences between minority/low-income students and non-minority/low-income students (NEA, 2008). Indicators of achievement gaps include performance on tests including the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Testing (ACT) assessment, access to key

opportunities such as advanced course offerings and specialized tutoring, and attainment such as high school diploma, scholarships and awards, college degree, and employment (NEA, 2008).

The achievement gap is generally used to describe the difference in performance of minority students and similar disparities between students of low-income families. The National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP) shows evidence of the achievement gap becoming narrowed for African-American and Latino students; however, a great difference still exist between minority and low income students and their Caucasian peers. Further research completed by the National Center for Education Statistics showed that African-American and Latino students trailed Caucasian students by more 20 test score points on the National Assessment of Educational Programs Math and Reading assessment, a difference of more than two grade levels (NCES, 2009).

Literature suggest that students who come from low income backgrounds often experience barriers related to socioeconomic status that transcend into their attainment of academic excellence. These students must often overcome obstacles that increase throughout their matriculation through secondary education. Their peers from high socioeconomic status do not experience many of these obstacles. These obstacles may limit or sometimes impede a student's ability to reach their full academic and professional potential.

Research suggests that teacher quality has a significant impact on student performance. Teacher quality also impact student attainment and success. Schools in high socioeconomic areas are able to provide their students with necessary tools and resources beyond the availability provided my traditional education allotments

(Johnstonbaugh, 2014). These schools have the ability to attract higher quality teachers by providing increased wages, smaller class sizes, preparation, facilities, resources, development, and autonomy, all of which have the potential to increase student success. Schools in high socioeconomic areas are also able to retain teachers by providing additional attractive resources (Johnstonbaugh, 2014). Students in schools in less affluent neighborhoods often miss the mark where teacher quality is concerned. Many of these students have first time teachers or high turnover within their schools. This greatly impacts the success of students in these schools and the outcomes they can expect to achieve (Johnstonbaugh, 2014).

Family Support and College Selection

The Pell Institute (2008) published a study examining college success for low income, first generation students. Analysis of this study revealed a number of challenges faced by low income, first generation students. This study specifically examined the transition from high school to the first-year of enrollment at college. Tinto (1993) identified this transition point as a pivotal point in the educational transition of students. This time is particularly crucial for at risk populations of students, such as first generation students. These students do not have the support networks that are normally available to other students. According to the Pell Institute (2008) these students are more than four times as likely to leave higher education after the first year.

Research conducted over the last 15 years indicates that parents of first generation students are supportive of their child's decision to attend college. Saenz, Hurtado, Berrera, Wolf, and Yeung (2007) showed that these students are now more likely to

report that the reason why they went to college was because their parents wanted them to go. Although parents are involved in the process, this research showed that first-generation students were more likely to rely on advice of guidance counselor and relatives in deciding to attend a particular college or university (Saenz et al., 2007). This study also showed that first generation students are more likely to attend college no more than 50 miles from their home. Many students surveyed in the study cited proximity to their home as one of the crucial deciding factors in selection of a college (Saenz et. al., 2007). Surprisingly, this study also revealed that first generation students have consistently been less likely to live on campus than their counterparts. This decision may be accountable for differences in academic achievement and social integration for these students (Saenz et. al., 2007).

Research on the influence of family on first generation college students is limited. Even fewer studies have examined the influences of family on the college experience. Previous research has suggested that one of the best indicators of postsecondary aspirations is family support (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006). For minority students, this does not represent many students reality. Bradbury and Mather (2009) conducted a qualitative study examining the experiences of first generation college students to understand the factors associated with the college experience (Hodge & Mellin, 2010). This study found that family involvement played a significant role in student success (Hodge & Mellin, 2010). This study further suggested that these familial relationships gave the student a feeling of identity and security.

Need for Achievement and College Selection

A study of student motivation is paramount when studying the college selection process. Motivation is defined as the act or process of motivating, providing stimuli, incentive, drive, or influence (Merriam-Webster, 1997). McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1958) defined the need for achievement as “success in competition with some standard of excellence. McClelland et al. (1958) suggested that individuals must have a feeling of achievement to feel fulfilled. McClelland describes an individual’s need for achievement as a drive to excel or to achieve in relation to a set standard. Simply put, the need for achievement is a behavior toward competition to achieve a set standard. McClelland discovered that individuals with high need for achievement often perform better than those with a moderate or low need for achievement.

Findings of McClelland’s research identified seven characteristics of high need achievers:

1. Strong desire to assume personal responsibilities for performing a task or finding a solution to a problem.
2. Tendency to set moderately difficult goals and take calculated risk.
3. Strong desire for performance feedback.
4. Achievement for attaining personal accomplishment.
5. Seek challenging tasks.
6. High need achievers have no tendency to redirect task to others.
7. High need achievers often seek tasks that are challenging but also have an opportunity for successful outcome.

Okoye (1983) posits that motivation holds the key to understanding human behavior. According to Okoye, motivation explains why one person may avoid work or difficult task, while another may find great satisfaction in reaching goals, working hard, and overcoming obstacles. Bank and Finlapson (1980) found that successful students generally possess high motivation and look to achievement as a source of fulfillment. These studies also suggest a high correlation between academic performance and need for achievement.

Achievement motivation is also correlated with achievement behavior (Camara, Nathan, & Puente, 2000). Achievement may display in different areas, but motivation often leads to better outcomes when comparing individuals with differing levels of motivation. Carr et al. (1991) found that children with high expectations of success do better in school and generally receive higher marks. Tella (2007) studied the impact of motivation on student academic achievement. The study examined secondary mathematics students in Nigeria. Results of this study suggest that motivation has an impact on academic achievement. The study identified varying motivating factors; however, the findings clearly showed that success in school differs significantly based on the extent to which a student is motivated to succeed.

Self-Efficacy and College Selection

Self-efficacy relates to an individual's belief in their ability to perform or complete a task or activity (Bandura, 1986). Particularly for students, it is the "I can" or "I can not" attitude. This concept differs from the idea of self-esteem, which categorizes the student's feeling of self-worth. Self-efficacy is task specific and does not ensure success

(Bandura, 1986). Similarly, yet distinct, self-concept is also a term used interchangeably with self-efficacy. Self-concept is used to define a student's perception of their ability and level of competency in academic settings (Demetriou & Kazi, 2001).

In the publication, "Thought and Action," Bandura (1986) examined a view of human functioning that focused heavily on individuals as proactive and self-regulating. This social cognitive theory, self-efficacy beliefs influence the choices individuals make and the course of action they pursue. Specifically for low income, minority students, this is paramount in determining their course of action after high school completion. These students tend to select a course of action that aligns with their feeling of competence and confidence. They tend to avoid unfamiliar or uncomfortable situations. Generally, the higher the sense of self-efficacy, the greater an individual's persistence and resilience (Bandura, 1986). Pajares and Miller (1994) also suggest that efficacy beliefs also impact the amount of stress and anxiety individuals experience as they engage in activity.

An individual's feelings or beliefs in their ability to complete task influence the outcomes they expect. Individuals who are more confident generally expect outcomes aligned with these beliefs. For students, this is particularly telling. Students who are confident in their ability write generally receive better grades than students who are not confident in their writing abilities. These beliefs and subsequent experiences often extend beyond grades and marks. Students who believe in their ability to become high achievers generally reach higher levels of academic and professional success, while students who are not confident in their ability to be successful often experience academic failure and curtailed possibilities.

Self-efficacy is thought to be shaped by models provided by outside sources. These models provide a basis for judging one's own capabilities. For students, academic success is determined by subjective grades and other means of judgment. These grades are then used to compare one student's academic attainment to the next student's performance (Festinger, 1954). Even without these comparisons, individuals may also judge their abilities and likelihood of success based on previous success or failures of others. These vicarious experiences may either encourage a student to increase their sense of self-efficacy. Similarly, observed failures may lower an individual's sense of self-efficacy.

Particularly for students, self-efficacy has a multifaceted effect on academic performance and achievement. These effects include: the amount of effort expended on college related and other academic goals, students' determination and drive to succeed despite obstacles, and the nature and difficulty of academic and professional goals. Observation of student goal achievement can be used to understand student performance, and engagement. According to Arico (2014), students with higher levels of self-confidence create the foundation for their academically relevant successes or failures. As students transition through high school and into college, their level of self-efficacy should increase. Students with low levels of self-efficacy can be expected to forgo college enrollment or to enroll in nonselective colleges or universities, simply because they are not confident in their ability to meet the academic demands of a selective college.

Persistence and College Selection

Vincent Tinto's (1975) theories on student persistence examined the components of students' lives that directly impact their education-related expectations, commitments, goals, and outcomes. Tinto's model proposed that the degree of success a student has in his or her pursuit of higher education influences the level of commitment a student has to an institution, academic goals, and career goals (Demetriou, 2014). Tinto (1975) hypothesized that students are more likely to remain enrolled in an institution if they become entwined in the fabric of the institution and connected to the social and academic life associated with their school. Although this theory focuses heavily on a student's matriculation in college, this theory can also be useful in explaining a student's commitment to academic achievement in high school and a student's decision to attend a less selective college based on feelings of incorporation after exposure to the university. A student's decision not to attend a college or university after exposure may occur when the student senses incongruence, or lack of institutional fit. Students who do not feel at home at an institution or do not believe that an institution can help them meet their academic and professional goals are unlikely to persist (Tinto, 1975). The same can also be said for a student's decision to commit through the entire college selection process.

Tinto describes the student integration process as a multifaceted idea consisting of academic and social components (Tinto, 1975). Academic integration within the institution occurs when students become entwined within the intellectual and academic life of the university. Social integration involves a student's incorporation in the cultural component (Tinto, 1975). Within the social component, students build social relationships and connections separate from academic elements of their college life.

Tinto posits that students must be incorporated within both elements to ensure their success and institutional buy-in; however, both components must not be equally integrated (Tinto, 1975).

Much of Tinto's work has been used to identify support services that will increase student integration and engagement on campus. The underlying thought of this research assumes that if students are engaged and integrated into the fabric of the college, persistence rates will increase (Tinto, 1998). Although Tinto's theories have been around for many years, the effectiveness of such efforts is not completely understood. Tinto's theory might be useful in determining ways to identify, recruit, and integrate students into the collegiate life, prior to completion of high school. Utilization of Tinto's theory in this manner could potentially assist with identifying best practices for recruitment and may also positively impact persistence as well (Tinto, 1998).

Tinto (1998) focused on the first year experiences of college students, particularly the necessary services and programs institutions must offer to ensure student success. These services and programs include New Student Orientation and Specialized Learning Communities. Despite the outcome, the central purpose of these programs and services is to integrate the student to the college life and promote involvement to increase student buy-in. The New Student Orientation program is designed to provide students with pertinent information such as information related to navigation of the campus and location of valuable campus resources (Tinto, 1998). Specialized learning communities are designed to promote student interaction with peers and advisors in order to improve academic performance. Although this revised version of Tinto's theory focuses on student integration after high school, this technique can also be used to improve student

potential student interest in the college (Tinto, 1998). By providing potential students with opportunities for involvement on campus, institutions can improve their visibility and access to students, thereby increasing the likelihood of enrollment.

Advisement and College Selection

The Independent Educational Consultant Association estimates that 22% of students enrolling at high selective colleges and universities receive one-on-one counseling beyond the high school guidance or advisement program (Avery, 2009). It is no secret that high school counselors often have heavy caseloads and must routinely juggle a demanding advisement schedule. The New National Survey released by the College Board detected a divide between educational goals and what actually occurs in schools (O'Shaughnessy, 2011). Particularly for counselors at urban schools, the focus is on ensuring that the greatest number of high school students graduate and that as many students as possible attend college. The focus on the highest achieving minority students attending the best and most selective colleges and universities is often lost. The ineffective in this area stems largely from inadequate training of counselors. Research shows that 73% of counselors have master's degrees and 58% are teachers or administrators. Only 16% of counselors feel they were properly trained or prepared for their jobs (O'Shaughnessy, 2011).

A number of studies have been conducted on the effects of effective and ineffective advisement for high achieving minority students. All studies agree that advisement is a pertinent component of the student life cycle; however, many minority students from low-income backgrounds continuously miss the mark where advisement is

concerned. A study conducted by Avery (2009) and Harvard University examined the effects of college counseling for students from low-income backgrounds. This study was conducted as a pilot study that examined the experiences of more than 100 high school seniors through the college admissions process during the 2006-2007 academic year (Avery, 2009). All students were from low-income neighborhoods and attended high schools with low enrollment at selective colleges and universities. To conduct the study, less than half of the students in the study were given the opportunity to receive 10 hours of individual advising from an experienced college counselor (Avery, 2009). The counseling sessions focused on where the students would apply and details of the application process (including essays and completion of admission documents). The goal of the study was to learn the college selection process of high achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Of the students selected for the Avery (2009) study, 70% of students listed one of the six Ivy League schools and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as their top choice (Avery, 2009). Nearly all of the students in the New York area had visited or were applying to Columbia and almost all of the Massachusetts students in the study were applying to selective colleges in Boston. Although many of the students in the study were not selected at their first choice institution, these students were successful in admission outcomes (Avery, 2009). Results of the study included 18 students who are attending one of the six selective colleges and three students are attending Ivy League colleges including Dartmouth, University of Pennsylvania, and Princeton (Avery, 2009). This study suggests the value of counseling. This study suggests that college counseling assisted students improve their college admission and application process and broaden

the students awareness of potential opportunities for attendance at selective colleges and universities.

Hoxby and Avery (2012) observed that students with typical achievement levels are generally concentrated in a small number of high schools in very large metropolitan areas. These students have a higher likelihood of being reached by traditional forms of college opportunities including experienced college guidance counselors at their high school with a large number of high achieving students, admissions staff visiting high schools or areas within the students area, and colleges visiting the high school or encouraging visits by local students (Hoxby & Turner, 2013). In comparison, high achieving, low-income students are typically dispersed. These students are often the sole or one of only a few achieving students in their school, and often their family. These students are at a further disadvantage because their counselor is often overworked and not familiar with selective colleges. Thus, the advisement received is usually focused on other issues (Hoxby & Turner, 2013). Due to the large disparity in disbursement of these students, college admission staff is generally not able to visit their area in a cost effective manner (Hoxby & Turner, 2013). These students generally do not live in areas near colleges or universities, thus they are unreached by traditional methods of student recruitment and disbursement of information related to selective college recruitment.

Technology and College Selection

The Internet and technology have significant changed the way in which we communicate, interact, and disseminate information. Today's youth have never known a world without technology. Consequently, this fact has shaped the ways in which students

are able to educate themselves and develop their unique self-expression. As many students who are transitioning into college look to social media and other forms of technology for all forms of college exposure, colleges and universities must adapt to these changes. Survey data from the 2009 report from the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) showed that most college admission offices consider social media outlets to be important tools for student recruitment, and are rapidly adopting these tools. Surprisingly, colleges and universities also utilized social media to research prospective students (NACAC, 2009).

As high school students consider their college choices, social media plays a very important part in this process. A recent study by Zinch (2014), an online college and scholarship matching service run by Chegg, showed that more than half of the respondents noted social media as a method they used for researching schools. High school students utilize Facebook more often than any other form of social media according to this study (Zinch, 2014). Of the students indicating Facebook as a method of interaction with colleges and universities, many students identified this source as a way to review a schools background (Zinch, 2014).

Martin (2006) examined the impact of the Internet and other technology on student's ability to obtain information on colleges and universities. This research showed that university websites were the primary source of information for students choosing a college (Martin, 2006). College websites combined with social media presence provide a way for students to become familiar with the institution and its culture despite distances and accessibility.

Summary

The research regarding college selection primarily focuses on the experiences of non-minority affluent students. These students generally have the means and access to colleges and universities, from which these students are able to choose from the top choice schools. Very few studies have been conducted regarding the experiences of low income, minority students and the college selection process. Many of the studies that have been completed on college selection compare the experience of low academically achieving students to high academically achieving students. More studies are needed to understand trends in the experiences of high achieving minority students and the selection of colleges and universities.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This section of the study identifies and describes the theoretical framework used to guide the study. This section also defines the independent and dependent variables. In addition, the relationship among variables will be discussed.

Theory of the Variables

This study determines if there is a significant relationship between the dependent variable: college selection and the independent variables: socioeconomic status, cost, high school GPA, family support, need for achievement, self-efficacy, persistence, advisement, and technology for Gates Millennium Scholars.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout the years, two main theoretical frameworks have been used to describe the college selection process of students. Econometric theories comprise the most well-known and heavily utilized theories when considering the college selection process. While effectively considering the characteristics of students and the institutions that serve them, including economic and sociological factors, this theoretical framework does not provide a summation of the basis for this study. Therefore, this study presents econometric theories as well as other relevant racial, cultural, and development theories.

Econometric Theories

Kotler and Fox (1985) described the college selection process as an investment for students and society. They believed that this investment motivates students to select a college or university. Later, McDonough, Antonia, and Trent (1997) described economic factors in a similar manner. This theory posits that college selection is an investment decision in which students consider the cost vs. benefit of attending a particular college or university. While helpful, this theory further posits that students have perfect information and are heavily engaged in the selection process until a college selection has been made. In general, economic theories focus on the student's ability to have the best and most appropriate information and to rationally consider the implications of their college selection in an effort to select the best school.

Jackson (1982) posits that students are incapable or may be hindered from making rational college choices by external factors including socioeconomic status and limited information. This study is particularly relevant when considering the reality of minority students. These students often do not have the access or means to obtain the necessary information to ensure the appropriate nature of their college selection. These students' socioeconomic status may significantly lessen their ability to make choices aligned with the theories of Kotler, Fox, and McDonough (1997). This theory aligns with the following independent variables: socioeconomic status, cost, advisement, high school GPA, family support, and persistence.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Development Theory

Phinney's (1990) Racial and Ethnic Identity Development Theory is a multidimensional model with components of other psychosocial development theories including Erikson's Identity Development Theory. Phinney primarily focuses on the experiences of the adolescent. Phinney posits that adolescents go through significant changes during this period of life, including greater abilities in cognition to consider ethnic identity. In addition, adolescents may have additional exposure outside their community and may develop a social life.

Phinney described three stages in which adolescent's progress:

Stage 1: Unexamined Ethnic Identity- Adolescents fall into two categories.

- **Diffusion** - No exposure to ethnicity. This is not a topic of concern.
- **Foreclosure** - Limited information has been obtained from family and friends.

This information is used without interaction with individuals of the ethnic group.

Stage 2: Ethnic Identity Search/ Moratorium

- Life experiences cause individual to examine their own ethnicity. General awareness of ethnicity is developed. More information is sought. Individual considers their personal membership within their ethnic group and the implications of that membership.

Stage 3: Ethnic Identity Achievement

- Acceptance of ethnic group and racial makeup. The individual is informed and accepting of their identity and are aware of the culture defined by their racial and ethnic makeup.

This theory aligns with the following independent variables: socioeconomic status, family support, need for achievement, self-efficacy, and advisement.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory finds its origin in the legal field. This theory recognizes a culmination of activist efforts to overcome a system of oppression and subtle racism after and around the Civil Rights movement. The Critical Race Theory posits that racism is engrained in the fabric and system of American society (Delgado & Jean, 2001). Critical Race Theory states that individual racist do not need to exist to affect a system of oppression, the idea of institutional racism is prominent enough in dominant culture (Delgado & Jean, 2001). Critical Race Theory power structures that are based on white privilege and white supremacy perpetuates the marginalization of minority people.

Ladson-Billings (1995) posits that race continues to be significant in explaining inequity in the United States. This assumption is made based on the observation that class and gender based explanations are not powerful enough to explain all of the difference in school experience and performance (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This theory does not negate the intersection of race, class, and gender. It states that these stand-alone variables are not effective in explaining the educational achievement differences apparent between Caucasian students and minority students. This theory aligns with the following independent variables: socioeconomic status, cost, family support, advisement, and technology.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Self-Efficacy Theory refers to an individual's confirming belief in his or her ability to execute behaviors or complete tasks to reach specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy reflects confidence in one's ability to balance motivation, behavior, and social environment (Bandura, 1994). Bandura posits that self-efficacy can be developed by four main sources of influences: successful experiences, vicarious experiences through social models, social persuasion, and somatic and emotional judgments. Bandura suggests that the level of self-efficacy leads to an individual approaching challenging situations or avoiding difficult situations. This level of self-efficacy also influences the behaviors associated with overcoming the challenging situation. Simply stated, individuals with a high level of self-efficacy will generally achieve higher outcomes due to their belief in their ability to overcome difficult tasks. Similarly, individuals with a low level of self-efficacy will generally not achieve desired outcomes because this individual is not confident in his or her ability to achieve.

This framework was selected to describe the level of self-efficacy of students based on their college selection choices. It is the opinion of the researcher that students that select highly selective colleges and universities are confident in their ability to achieve academically and reach the desired goals of obtaining admission and degree completion. This framework also aligns with these independent variables: socioeconomic status, cost, self-efficacy, family support, advisement, need for achievement, high school GPA, and persistence.

The relationship between Econometric Theory, Racial and Ethnic Identity Development Theory, Critical Race Theory, Self-Efficacy Theory, and their overlapping

relationships to the independent variables are shown in Table 6. These theories were used to guide the research and created a context by which each of the independent variables could be evaluated. In addition, the theories chosen limited the generalizations and provided a basis for examination of the independent variables and the relationship to college selection.

Table 6

Theoretical Framework and Independent Variable Relationship

College Selection			
<i>Econometric Theories</i>	<i>Racial and Ethnic</i>		
	<i>Identity Development</i>	<i>Critical Race</i>	<i>Self-Efficacy</i>
	<i>Theory</i>	<i>Theory</i>	<i>Theory</i>
Socioeconomic Status	Socioeconomic Status	Socioeconomic Status	Self-Efficacy
Cost	Family support	Cost	Socioeconomic Status
Advisement	Need for Achievement	Family Support	Family Support
High School GPA	Self-Efficacy	Advisement	Advisement
Family Support	Advisement	Technology	Need for Achievement
Persistence			High School GPA
			Persistence
			Cost

Relationship among the Variables

A model of college selection that explored the experiences and characteristics of minority students was not found; however, general models of college selection were plentiful. This is problematic as the general models often consider only the experience of

high socioeconomic status white male students. Through examination of the literature, a predicted relationship between the impact of racial and ethnic experiences, academic performance, family support, socioeconomic status, and other factors play a significant role in college selection for minority students, particularly African-American students. Each independent variable identified has an unequal impact on the dependent variable. The independent variables are arranged in a clockwise grouping format beginning with factors that are first developed in the college selection process and factors that are developed closer to the selection of a college or university. Figure 2 shows the relationship between these variables.

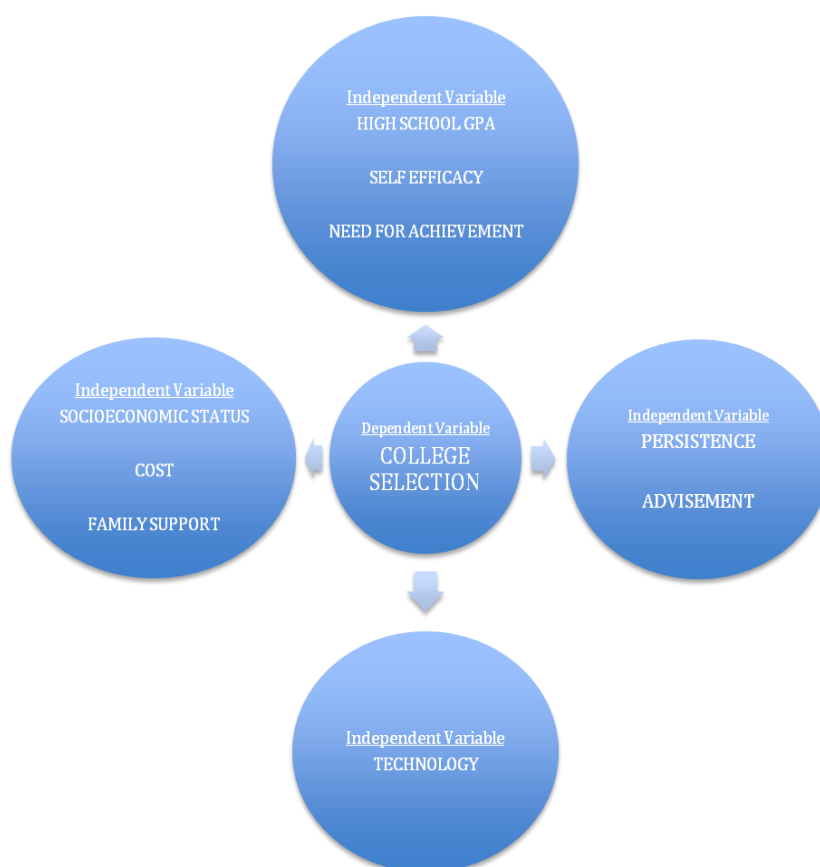


Figure 2: Relationship of independent variables on the dependent variable.

Definition of Variables

Dependent Variable

College Selection (CSE) - For the purposes of this study, college selection refers to the college or university the student identifies as a “top choice,” the schools to which he or she applies, and the school at which the student makes a commitment to attend.

Independent Variables

Advisement (ADV) - For the purposes of this study, advisement refers to the number of hours spent in academic advisement and counseling related to the selection of a college or university. Advisement also considers the quality of the counseling received related to the selection process.

Cost (COS) - For the purposes of this study, cost will refer to all expenses associated with admission and attendance at the selected college and university. It is the opinion of the researcher that cost refers to more than tuition, books, and related expenses. Cost may also refer to transportation, living expenses, and other socially determined expenses necessary for full incorporation into the life and fabric of the institution.

Family Support (FUS) - For the purposes of this study, family support is defined as the financial, emotional, and physical support related to educational experiences. The Family structure is defined as parents, caregivers, peers, and other stakeholders.

High School GPA (GPA) - For the purposes of this study, high school GPA will be measured by self-reporting and by considering the requirements for selection in the Gates Millennium Scholarship program. High school GPA refers to the cumulative

calculation of grades assigned and class rank. These GPA requirements were set in 1999 during the inauguration of the program and were used to guide this study.

Need for Achievement (NFA) - For the purposes of this study, students were asked to self report their involvement and participation with additional services and programs that could assist in the development of their academic performance.

Persistence (PER) - For the purposes of this study, persistence is defined as the semester-to-semester matriculation of a student, which indicates their desire to return to their institution and to complete their degree program.

Self-Efficacy (SEF) - For the purposes of this study, Self Efficacy is defined as the belief in ones ability to accomplish task and achieve desired outcomes.

Socioeconomic Status (SES) - For the purposes of this study, socioeconomic status is determined based on the student's eligibility for a federal Pell grant as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is completed based parents reported income as indicated on tax documents.

Technology (TEC) - For the purposes of this study, Technology refers to a culmination of all electronic communication by which students are able to obtain and exchange information related to colleges and college selection. Technology is measured by the students self reported use of social media, college websites, and other databases relevant to the selection of a college or university.

Summary

This chapter examined the conceptual and theoretical basis for the study. These theories aided the researcher in understanding the patterns of behavior effecting college

selection for the students in the study. These theories were utilized to better understand the issue of college under match as it pertained to the social, cognitive, and overall development of college bound students. These theories were selected based on their ability to enhance understanding as it relates to college selection.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors effecting institution selection for undergraduate Gates Millennium Scholars. It is important to note that college enrollment is down for all institutional types; however, the issue of enrollment only examines the surface of a larger problem when examining trends among African-American students. This study examined the factors that specifically impact of socioeconomic status, cost, high school GPA, family support, need for achievement, self-efficacy, persistence, advisement, and technology on college selection for Gates Millennium Scholars. This chapter discusses the research design, description of the setting, research procedure, instrumentation, participation of subjects, data collection procedures, statistical applications and how the research questions align with a direct the study.

Research Design

Mixed-methods research has become popular in recent years and has become a widely used approach across disciplines. With the rising popularity of this research approach, criticism has also emerged (e.g., Greene, 2008; Morse, 2005; Creswell, Plano, Clark, & Garrett, 2008). Although these concerns have emerged, they have been largely

ignored by researched. It is the opinion of the researcher that the mixed methods approach the opportunity to gain valuable and in depth of understanding and corroboration of the research, while off setting the weakness inherent to using the quantitative and qualitative approaches independently. One of the greatest benefits of the mixed methods approach is the possibility of triangulation. Triangulation is defined by Denzin (1978) as the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. This method examines various methods, data sources, and researchers. Triangulation allows the researcher to identify aspects of phenomenon more accurately by examining the research using various methods and techniques. The study utilized regression analyses to determine the dependent variable: college selection may have with the independent variables: socioeconomic status, cost, high school GPA, family support, need for achievement, self-efficacy, persistence, advisement, and technology for Gates Millennium Scholars.

The research took place using Gates Millennium Scholars groups on Facebook and through direct email solicitation. The Gates Millennium Scholars Facebook group that was used will be the GMS 2015 group. Participants for the study were identified by participation in the Gates Millennium Scholarship Facebook group. Students were allowed to self identify as a scholar and participation in the study will be voluntary. A 40-item survey was administered to students in the Gates Millennium Scholars group on Facebook. The researcher conducted a focus group with seven current Gates Millennium Scholars to gather additional information regarding the college selection process. The survey instrument was used to determine if there is a significant relationship between the

dependent variable: college selection and the independent variables: socioeconomic status, cost, high school GPA, family support, need for achievement, self-efficacy, persistence, advisement, and technology for Gates Millennium Scholars.

A survey design was utilized to obtain a great amount of data necessary to examine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Students were identified using social media and a survey was administered based on voluntary participation. The survey was cross-sectioned and administered using Survey Monkey web based surveying software. Students were offered the opportunity to receive a randomized incentive for participation in the study. Data obtained from the Gates Millennium Foundation were utilized to analyze participant's ability to pay as determined by eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant Program. Other predetermined criterion for Gates Millennium Scholar eligibility was utilized to examine student academic performance in the study. The focus group portion of the study was used to obtain detailed feedback regarding the college selection process for current undergraduate Gates Millennium Scholars.

Description of the Setting

The participants of this study are current Gates Millennium Scholars. These students are currently enrolled students in their freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate degree program. Participants in the study are required to meet all scholarship eligibility requirements including: a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.3, demonstrated academic leadership potential, volunteerism, and community service. In

addition, students must also be eligible for the Federal Pell Grant Program to be considered for the Gates Millennium Scholars Program.

Facebook was the primary means of communication and solicitation of participants due to the large number of Gates Scholars utilizing forums and groups specifically designed for communication between scholars. These forums and groups allow scholars to virtually meet each other, share important information, learn about the latest Gates Millennium Scholars news, and receive advisement as necessary. The Gates Millennium Scholars program Facebook page is professionally run by a Gates Millennium Staff member or student ambassador, and students are screened prior to acceptance in the forum or group.

Sampling Procedures

The sampling for this study was purposeful. The focus group participants selected were selected based on their identification as a Gates Millennium Scholar recipient within the cohort years of 2004-2015. Focus group participants were classified as freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate scholars. Students were asked to self identify as a scholar based on notification received from the Gates Millennium Scholarship Foundation. There are approximately 19,050 Gates Millennium Scholars and Alumni in the United States. Of these 19,000 Gates Millennium Scholars, there are approximately 4,000 active undergraduate scholars. The sample size for the survey portion of the study is a 50-100 participants. These 50-100 participants were randomly selected from the 900+ students actively participating in the Gates Millennium scholars Facebook group titled GMS 2015. In addition, other Gates Millennium Scholars who

provided contact information during the 2015 Gates Millennium Conference in Chantilly, Virginia were contacted for participation in the study.

Working with Human Subjects

Before beginning the data collection projects, participants were given a written consent form to ensure no harm is done to individual participants. Data gathered from the study will remain confidential. To further enforce the confidentiality of the study, survey participants were notified of their rights and confidentiality prior to initiation of the survey. Focus group students were also notified of their confidentiality prior to participation in the focus group process. Students participating in the focus group qualified for an incentive. Survey participants had the opportunity to receive an incentive for participation in the study. All survey data will remain confidential and students were not asked to provide any directly identifying information. Only the researcher knows the identity of the student participants.

Instrumentation

The study consisted of two types of instrumentation: a focus group and a 40-item survey. The focus group students were prescreened and selected based on their selection as Gates Millennium Scholars. These students were invited to participate in the focus group portion of the study. This focus group was utilized to gain an understanding of the college selection process of Gates Millennium Scholars and low-income minority students in general. The focus group consisted of questions aligned to the research questions, were broad, and open-ended in nature. This allowed the students to provide substantial feedback for each question.

The focus group protocol began with an overview of the study, intended outcomes, and consent regarding confidentiality. The researcher utilized a recording device to ensure that all data were properly collected. After the focus group had been completed, the researcher immediately transcribed the data.

The survey instrument utilized questions aligned with the research questions. The survey questions were designed by the researcher and were specifically tailored to the purpose of the study. The survey instrument began with demographic data collection designed to gain insight into the background of the survey participants. The survey also collected data about the dependent and independent variables. The survey questions were intended to gain insight into the college selection process for low-income minority students.

The researcher drafted the survey instrument and the interview instrument. Once the instruments and necessary protocol had been developed, the researcher submitted the documents for review by the researcher's dissertation committee and the researchers institutional review board. Once the survey and focus group protocol had been reviewed, the survey questions were loaded into Survey Monkey and emailed to potential participants. In addition, the focus group was scheduled and performed. Data collected from the survey instrument were reviewed and loaded into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. In addition, the results of the focus group were transcribed and analyzed for themes. The survey instrument and student focus group protocol are available in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

Participants and Location of Research

The researcher randomly selected 50-100 Gates Millennium Scholars to participate in the study. The participants were classified as Gates Millennium Scholars who are/were enrolled full time within the first, second, third, fourth year of studies, or a GMS qualified graduate program. Students receiving the Gates Millennium scholarship between the years of 2004-2015 were prequalified for participation. Participants were matriculates through a bachelor's degree program, self-identified as low income based on results of the Federal Pell Grant program, and self-identified as African-American, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Chicano/Latino, Native American/Alaskan Native, or multiracial.

Data Collection Procedures

Once the survey instrument and interview protocol had been reviewed by the researcher's dissertation committee and all corrections and recommendations had been submitted and approved, the researcher ensured that

1. Proper documentation was completed and submitted to the institutional review board at the institution in which the study was based.
2. The institutional review board reviewed the study. Once the proper documentation was approved, the data collection process began.
3. Students were solicited using the Gates Millennium Scholars Facebook group. Students voluntarily supplied contact information for participation in the study.

4. From the students wishing to supply contact information, a random group of 100 scholars were selected for participation.
5. The survey questions were loaded into Survey Monkey and the survey was emailed to potential participants.
6. Survey participants had five days to complete the survey. A reminder email was sent to participants three days after the initial launch of the survey.
7. Another reminder was sent six days after the initial launch of the survey if the required number of responses had not been collected.
8. If the required number of responses had not been collected the second week after the initial survey launch, the researcher directly contacted students to solicit participation in the study.
9. Once survey data had been collected, the researcher loaded the data into SPSS for analysis.
10. The researcher contacted students for a focus group meeting.
11. The researcher conducted the focus group.
12. The researcher transcribed the focus group meeting.

Statistical Applications

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is a software package used for statistical analysis. SPSS was utilized to analyze the data obtained from the survey instrument. Analysis of the interview protocol and transcript was used to identify themes and significant relationships between the dependent and independent variables. The impact of these relationships was analyzed to determine the impact of each independent

variable on college selection for Gates Millennium Scholars. A regression analysis was completed in SPSS to further identify any significant relationships.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that much of the data obtained was student self-reported data. This provided challenges in the process of obtaining honest and factual data. Some of the data may have also been obtained from students who were within their first year of college enrollment. This presented difficulties as these students may have been less than straight forward in the selection of their answers due to perceived conflicts regarding their academic and social standing and completion of the survey. Another limitation was due to the student's inability to describe their college selection process and the factors effecting their selection. Students were hesitant to be honest and forthcoming with the factors they considered when selecting a college or university, particularly for students heavily affected by personal conflicts. Lastly, there was a challenge in ensuring that students understood the survey questions. Students may have been hesitant to answer honestly in fear that their answers would impact their scholarship award. Students were informed that their participation in the study would in no way impact their academic standing at the institutions they attended and in no way would their answers impact their eligibility for the Gates Millennium Scholarship.

Other limitations of this study include the following:

1. Participation was open to all Gates Millennium Scholars regardless of matriculation date (1999-present). This provided a limitation, as students who

matriculated more than 5 years prior to the study may not have remembered the factors effecting the selection of their undergraduate program.

2. The researcher is a Gates Millennium Scholar and works closely with the target population being examined. Participants may have felt obligated to complete the survey as a requirement of the scholarship program.
3. The researcher was a scholar in the Gates Millennium Scholarship program. Participants may have felt obligated to complete the survey instrument as a result of affiliation with the target population. Additionally, the researcher had access to the Gates Millennium Scholarship Leadership Conference and may have had an impact on student participation in the study.
4. Again, the researcher was a scholar in the Gates Millennium Scholarship program. Students participating in the Focus Group portion of the study may have felt obligated to participate due to the researcher's relationship to the Gates Millennium Scholars program; however, participants may not have divulged all information related to college selection during the focus group.

Summary

This chapter examined the method by which the researcher has designed the study, the method for data collection, instrumentation, procedure for working with human subjects, participant selection, statistical applications, and limitations of the study. This chapter also examined the relationship between the research questions and the instruments utilized in the study. Chapter V reviews and analyzes the data collected.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter reviews the research questions and provides a comprehensive analysis of the quantitative data. This chapter also provides information on participant selection and demographics. Analysis of the qualitative data provided by the focus group portion of the study is also presented in this chapter, including review of participant selection and demographic data.

Data analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant relationship between the dependent variables: college selection and the independent variables: socioeconomic status, cost, high school GPA, family support, need for achievement, self efficacy, persistence, advisement, and technology. Data were collected primarily through self-selecting Facebook groups for Gates Millennium Scholars. Students were allowed to participate at will. The research questions guided the data analysis portion of the study. Findings from the data analysis are presented and discussed below.

The purpose of this study was to examine and identify factors that influence selection of a college or university for select population of Gates Millennium Scholars meeting the following participation criteria: students must have actively been enrolled in the GMS program between the years of 2004-2016, students must identify as a minority by requirements stated in the requirements for the Gates Millennium Scholarship

program. The goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of college “under match” for minority students to better improve the college application and admission process for underserved student populations. College under match is a term that describes when an academically qualified student chooses to attend a higher education institution that is less selective than their academic ability. Less selective refers to the admission, graduation, and retention rates of the college or university. A mixed methods design was used, and the study involved collecting qualitative data derived from a student focus group. This data were used to further support data derived from the quantitative data derived from the survey instrument.

Description Summary

A message to a prequalified group of Gates Millennium Scholars was posted on the Gates Millennium Scholars Facebook group GMS2015. This message contained a link to an online survey instrument consisting of 40 questions. The survey allowed students to identify their undergraduate institution by including their institutional email address. Approximately 900 Gates Millennium Scholars were emailed the survey. A total of 117 surveys were completed for a return rate of 13%. Of the 117 surveys completed, 87 included undergraduate institution information for data analysis. The prequalified group of Gates Millennium Scholars consisted of freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate scholars. The prequalified group of Gates Millennium Scholars included African-American, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Chicano/Latino, Native American/Alaskan Native, and multiracial scholars; 70 different institutions were represented in the study

Tier rankings were assigned by previously determined criteria. The primary criteria were college endowment amount and graduation rate (see Table 7). Secondary criteria included: acceptance rate, institution reputation, and institutional resources. Rankings were considered when designating a school as top, middle, and low tier. The table in Appendix C identifies the tier, criteria, colleges in each tier, and number of participants from each college.

Table 7

Classification Criteria for Tier Rankings

	Criteria #1	Criteria #2
College Tier Level	ENDOWMENT	GRADUATION RATE
High Tier	1 billion or more	More than 90%
Middle Tier	Less than 1 billion- 100 million	90-55%
Low Tier	Less than 100 million	Less than 55%

Dependent Variables and Data Analysis

College Selection

The following research questions were designed to gather information regarding the factors that influenced selection of a college or university for Gates Millennium Scholars:

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and socioeconomic status?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the cost of attendance?

- RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the advisement (from parents, teachers, counselors, and other stakeholders) that scholars receive prior to selection of a college?
- RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's level of self-efficacy?
- RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's need for achievement?
- RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's high school GPA?
- RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the recruitment process of highly selective colleges and universities?

The central qualitative research question of this study was the following:

- How do Gates Millennium Scholars describe the primary factors that influenced their college selection choice?

Additional questions were designed to further examine the central qualitative research question:

- RQ8: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and student use of technology?
- RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and family support?

RQ10: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and their commitment to persist?

RQ 11: What common themes emerged among Gates Millennium Scholars related to satisfaction of college selection?

A mixed-methods research question combined both aspects of the qualitative and quantitative aspects of this study. The mixed methods question addressed by this study was: *In what ways do the data obtained from surveys obtained from Gates Millennium Scholars regarding the relationship between receiving the Gates Millennium Scholarship and college selection help to explain the trends identified regarding selection of attendance at non-top 10 U.S. institutions?*

Quantitative Phase

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the factors that influence college selection for minority Gates Millennium Scholars. Surveys were administered at the conclusion of the fall 2015 term and data analysis occurred during the winter break and during the beginning of the spring 2016 term. Administration of the survey at the conclusion of the fall 2015 term was important for this study as it allowed time for freshman students to complete an entire semester at their respective institutions prior to completion of the survey. Survey instrument questions pertaining to college selection were separated by positive, negative, and neutral meaning questions that indicated the importance of various factors that influenced the student's selection of their college or university. Table 8 shows the alignment of the variables and survey questions.

Table 8

Alignment of the Variables and Survey Questions

Variable		Survey Question(s)
Demographic Information	Research Question	1 – 4
Dependent Variable:		See Focus Group
College Selection		
Independent Variable:	RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between	5-8
Socioeconomic Status	Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the cost of attendance?	
Independent Variable:	RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between	9-11
Cost	Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the cost of attendance?	
Independent Variable:	RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between	12-14
High School GPA	Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and high school GPA?	
Independent Variable:	RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between	15-18
Family Support	Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and family support?	
Independent Variable:	RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between Gates	19-22
Need for Achievement	Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's need for achievement?	
Independent Variable:	RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between Gates	23-25
Self Efficacy	Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's level of self-efficacy?	
Independent Variable:	RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between Gates	26-30
Persistence	Millennium Scholar college selection and persistence?	

(continued)

Table 8 (continued)

Variable		Survey Question(s)
Demographic Information	Research Question	1 – 4
Independent Variable: Advisement	RQ8: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the advisement (from parents, teachers, counselors, and other stakeholders) that scholars receive prior to selection of a college?	31-33
Independent Variable: Recruitment	RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the recruitment processes of selective colleges and universities?	34-38
Independent Variable: Technology	RQ10: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's use of technology?	39-40

The following tables provide a breakdown of the gender of participants, ethnicity of participants, college classification, parent education level, and first generation status of survey participants. Male students accounted for 39.5% of the participants, while females accounted for 60.5% of the participants (see Table 9).

Table 9

Survey Participant Demographic by Gender - Results

#	Gender	Response	%
1	Female	52	60.5
2	Male	34	39.5
	Total	86	100

The ethnic makeup of participants represented a prequalified group of students eligible for the Gates Millennium Scholarship. Nonminority students were ineligible for scholarships and did not participate in the study. Since no students identified as other, the researcher made the decision to omit this category (see Table 10).

Table 10

Survey Participants' Ethnicity

#	Ethnicity	Response	%
1	African-American	31	35.6
2	Asian American-Pacific Islander	10	11.5
3	Chicano/Latino	29	33.3
4	Native American/Alaskan Native	7	8.05
5	Multiracial	10	11.5
	Total	87	100.0

The response rate indicated a comparatively high percentage of Chicano/Latino and African-American students, lower percentage of Asian, Native American, and Multiracial students. These results are consistent with student representation in previous Gates Millennium cohorts. Table 11 outlines the participants' response rate by college classification.

Table 11

Survey Participants' Response Rate by College Classification

#	College Classification	Response	%
1	Freshman	64	74.4
2	Sophomore	7	8.1
3	Junior	4	4.7
4	Senior	3	3.5
5	Other	8	9.3
	TOTAL	86	100.0

Further analysis was conducted for parents' education level to observe differences that may have influenced selection of a college or university for Gates Millennium Scholars. Information on education level was collected separately for mothers and fathers of participants and displayed in Tables 12 and 13, respectively.

Table 12

Mother's Education Level

#	Highest Level of Education	Response	%
1	Less than High School Diploma	13	14.9
2	High School Diploma	20	23.0
3	Some College	16	18.4
4	Associates Degree	15	17.2

(continued)

Table 12 (continued)

#	Highest Level of Education	Response	%
5	Bachelors Degree	10	11.5
6	Graduate or Professional Degree	6	6.9
7	Other	7	8.0
	TOTAL	87	100.0

Table 13

Father's Education Level

#	Highest Level of Education	Response	%
1	Less than High School	18	20.7
2	High School Diploma	21	24.1
3	Some College	18	20.7
4	Associates Degree	8	9.1
5	Bachelors Degree	7	8.0
6	Graduate or Professional Degree	1	1.1
7	Other	14	16.0
	TOTAL	87	100.0

Percentages were compared across ethnicities and educational level to determine any correlation between ethnicity of participants and parental education level. Asian American students were found to have parents with the lowest education levels, with approximately 70% having completed a high less than a Bachelors degree. Multiracial

students were found to have parents with the highest education level, with approximately 50% having completed a bachelor's degree or higher (see Tables 14 and 15, respectively).

Table 14

Mothers' Highest Level of Education by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	High School			Graduate or	
	Diploma or	Some	Associate's	Bachelor's	Professional
	Less	College	Degree	Degree	Degree
African-American	10	6	8	4	2
Asian American-Pacific Islander	4	2	3	0	1
Chicano/Latino	13	5	3	3	0
Native American/Alaskan Native	3	2	0	1	1
Multiracial	3	1	1	2	2
TOTAL	30	16	15	10	6

Table 15

Fathers' Highest Level of Education by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	High School			Graduate or	
	Diploma or	Some	Associate's	Bachelor's	Professional
	Less	College	Degree	Degree	Degree
African-American	11	7	5	2	0
Asian American-Pacific Islander	5	3	0	0	0
Chicano/Latino	17	4	1	3	0
Native American/Alaskan Native	0	2	1	1	1
Multiracial	6	2	1	1	0
TOTAL	39	18	7	7	1

The data also show that fathers typically have a lower education level when compared to the education levels of mothers. This decline in parent education level may be a result of the participants who returned the survey, rather than a representation of the student population in general. This data were also used to determine which students were first generation college students. Parent education level was assigned a value representing the highest education level for both parents combined. (A student who had at least one parent who had attained a bachelor's degree was classified as a non-first generation college student). Table 16 identifies the number of first-generation college students by ethnicity.

Table 16

Percent of First-Generation vs. Non-First Generation by Ethnicity

Race	First Generation	Non-First Generation
African-American	55%	45%
Asian American-Pacific Islander	70%	30%
Chicano/Latino	59%	41%
Native American/Alaskan Native	57%	43%
Multiracial	50%	50%

Descriptive Analysis

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence selection of a college or university for minority Gates Millennium Scholars. Questions were asked to determine which factors influenced selection of a college or university. Questions were framed to determine any statistically significant relationships between each participant's

college tier and each dependent variable. Several areas pertinent to the college selection process were designated as possible factors that may influence selection of a college or university. In addition, the use of various types of technology was examined to determine any statistically significant correlation with college selection. Data were obtained and examined to determine differences in answers based on gender, ethnicity and parent education level. T-tests and ANOVAs were conducted to determine significant differences between variables and to further analyze the data obtained.

Research Questions and Data Analysis

College Selection and Socioeconomic Status

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and socioeconomic status?

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between college and socioeconomic status. Survey instrument questions for this variable were developed to provide a mixture of positive and negative meaning questions. Significance was determined at the .05 level. Analysis of this variable determined that socioeconomic status is not significantly related to selection of a college or university. Table 17 shows the results of this analysis. The lack of statistically significant findings between college selection and socioeconomic status may be explained by the manner in which questions were framed; 93% of students identified as Pell Grant eligible; 86% of participants indicated that their parents were unable to provide financial support toward education expenses. Further analysis of the relationship between socioeconomic status and college selection may be warranted based on the data obtained.

Table 17

Pearson Correlation: Socioeconomic Status and College Selection

SocioEconStat	Pearson Correlation	-.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.680
	N	87

The Gates Millennium Scholarship is designed to cover unmet need. To be eligible for the program students must also be Pell Grant eligible. For the purpose of this study, Pell Grant eligibility was determined to be tied closely to the reported income of the parent(s). Pell grant amounts may change each year; however, the maximum award is \$5,775. The amount awarded is determined by financial need, cost of attendance, full time/part time status, and plans to attend for the entire academic year or less.

College Selection and Cost

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the cost of attendance?

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between college selection and cost of attendance. Students were asked to rate their feelings regarding the cost of education and noneducational expenses related to their attendance at their respective institutions. Significance was determined at the .05 level. The analysis determined no statistically significant relationship between college selection and cost of attendance. Table 18 shows the results of the Pearson Correlation.

Table 18

Pearson Correlation: Cost of Attendance and College Selection

AbilitytoPay	Pearson Correlation	.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.804
	N	86

Most survey participants disclosed that they do not work while attending college. Of the total participants only 30% worked to pay for all or a portion of their educational expenses. This may be explained by the financial support provided by the scholarship program. Many students receive a stipend from the Gates Millennium Scholarship after their education related expenses have been paid. The amount of the stipend is also directly related to the students Pell Grant eligibility. Further research may be needed to determine the amount of the student stipend and the student's ability to meet the demands of nontraditional educational expenses.

College Selection and Advisement

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the advisement (from parents, teachers, counselors, and other stakeholders) that scholars receive prior to selection of a college?

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between college selection and advisement. Advisement was also measured against additional dependent variables. Significance was determined at the .05 level. The analysis

determined that advisement was not directly related to college selection; however, a significant relationship was determined between advisement and family support. Tables 19 and 20 show the results of the Pearson Correlation.

Table 19

Pearson Correlation: Advisement

Advisement	Pearson Correlation	.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.784
	N	87

Table 20

Pearson Correlation: Advisement and Family Support

Advisement	Pearson Correlation	.417**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	86

The lack of significant relationship between advisement and college selection may have also been a result of the manner in which the questions were asked. The identification of a statistically significant relationship between advisement and family support suggests that the two variables may work collaboratively to explain the selection of a college or university. These variables are likely related because participants likely obtained some form of advisement from their parent or guardian. These variables are similar and may be explained by this relationship.

Question 17 measuring family support asked students to determine the extent to which they agreed with the following statement: my parent or caregiver took me to visit colleges or universities prior to selection of a school. Only 38% of participants indicated that their parent or guardian took them to visit colleges or universities prior to their selection. In addition, question 33 measuring advisement asked student to determine the extent to which they agreed with the following statement: my parent or guidance counselor informed me of my eligibility for highly selective college or universities. Of the total participants, only 49% of participants indicated that their parent or guidance counselor informed them of their eligibility for selective college or universities.

The survey questions (a) I received college guidance from my high school guidance counselor, (b) my guidance counselor provided information on selective colleges and universities, and (c) my parents or guidance counselor informed me about my eligibility for selective colleges or universities are overlapping questions that may have also measured a form of family support depending on the participant. Fifty-six percent of participants indicated that they received guidance from their guidance counselor during the college selection process; 43% of participants indicated that their guidance counselor informed them about selective colleges or universities during the college selection process.

College Selection and Self-Efficacy

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's level of self-efficacy?

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between college selection and self-efficacy. Significance was determined at the .05 level. The analysis determined no significant relationship between college selection and self-efficacy; however, self-efficacy was found to be significantly related to need for achievement and persistence. The results of these Pearson correlations are shown in Tables 21-23.

Table 21

Pearson Correlation: Self-Efficacy

SelfEfficacy2	Pearson Correlation	.061
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.577
	N	86

Table 22

Pearson Correlation: Self-Efficacy and Persistence

SelfEfficacy2	Pearson Correlation	.233*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031
	N	86

Table 23

Pearson Correlation: Self-Efficacy and Need for Achievement

SelfEfficacy2	Pearson Correlation	.239*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027
	N	86

Self-efficacy data were included to determine if a statistically significant relationship exist between a students level of confidence in their ability to perform well at a highly selective college or university and their desire to attend a moderate to nonselective institution. While data obtained suggest that self-efficacy may affect a student's ability to perform well after being admitted to a college or university, it has no statistically significant impact on a student's selection of a college or university.

College Selection and Need for Achievement

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's need for achievement?

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between college selection and need for achievement. This variable was also measured against all other independent variables. Significance was determined at the .05 level. The analysis determined that college selection was not significantly related to college selection. Table 24 shows the results of the Pearson Correlation.

Table 24

Pearson Correlation: Need for Achievement

NeedforAch	Pearson Correlation	.017
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.877
	N	87

The results of the Pearson Correlation between college selection and need for achievement may have been affected by similarities in the participation pool. Gates

Millennium Scholars represent a highly diverse population of students, and thus these students may possess many of the same or very similar characteristics related to need for achievement.

College Selection and High School GPA

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the student's high school GPA?

All participants were assumed to have at least a graduating cumulative high school GPA of 3.3 or higher as required by the Gates Millennium Scholars program. A Chi Square test was conducted to determine the relationship between college selection and high school GPA. Significance was determined at the .05 level. The analysis of survey data showed no significant relationship between high school GPA and the independent variable. Table 25 shows the results of the Chi Square test.

Table 25

Chi Square Test: High School GPA

	HSGPA	N	Mean Rank
TierStatus	Agree	6	57.00
	Strongly Agree	80	42.49
	Total	86	

Survey questions (a) my cumulative GPA was more than a 3.5 in high school, (b) I graduated in the top 10% of my high school class, and (c) I felt confident in my ability to meet the requirements for the Gates Millennium Scholarship were designed to

determine the students overall performance prior to selection of a college or university. The lack of statistical data as it relates to this variable may be directly related to the requirements of the Gates Millennium Scholarship program as many students receiving the scholarship may have similar high school performance thereby leading to trends in the data. Additional questions may be included to assess standardized test performance. This data were omitted because the Gates Millennium Scholars program does not require SAT or ACT exam scores. Further research should be conducted to determine the impact of high school performance and selection of a college or university.

College Selection and the Recruitment Process

RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and the recruitment process of highly selective colleges and universities?

A Chi Square test was conducted to determine the relationship between college selection and the recruitment processes of high selective colleges and universities. The recruitment processes of highly selective colleges and universities were also measured against other independent variables. Significance was determined at the .05 level. The analysis determined that there was not a statistically significant relationship between college selection and the recruitment process of highly selective colleges and universities. Table 26 shows the results of the chi-square test.

Table 26

Chi-Square Test: Recruitment Processes of Highly Selective Colleges and Universities

	RecCampusTour	N	Mean Rank
TierStatus	1. Strongly Disagree	14	34.11
	2. Disagree	9	43.89
	3. Neutral	13	55.15
	4. Agree	33	45.00
	5. Strongly Agree	18	41.86
	Total	87	

College Selection and the Use of Technology

RQ8: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and student use of technology?

A Chi-Square test was conducted to determine the relationship between college selection and the use of technology. Significance was determined at the .05 level. The analysis determined that the use of technology was not significantly related to college selection. Table 27 shows the results of the Chi-Square test.

Participants used Facebook more than any other website (49%). Of the additional participants 50% stated that they used no website at all when selecting a college or university. Participants were also asked to identify what other technology based resources were utilized in selection of a college or university (see Table 28).

Table 27

Chi-Square Test: Social Networks

	Ranks		
	UseSocNetwork	N	Mean Rank
TierStatus	1. Facebook	39	40.85
	2. Myspace	1	53.00
	3. Twitter	2	53.00
	4. Blogs	1	16.50
	5. None	44	46.81
	Total	87	

Table 28

Percent of Participant Utilization of Social Networks by Gender

Social Network	Female	Male
Facebook	50	38
Myspace	2	0
Twitter	2	3
Blogs	0	3
None	44	56

Analyzing participant responses of degree of influence by ethnicity showed that African-American students primarily used Facebook as their means for learning about their college of choice; 42% of African-American participants used Facebook, while only

3% of African-American participants used Twitter and Blogs; 68% of African-American students reported that they used no social networks when selecting a college or university. Asian American students reported Facebook was very influential (70%) while 30% stated they used no social networks when selecting a college or university. Chicano/Latino participants also utilized Facebook (38%) as their primary resource for selecting a college or university, while 3% of participants stated they used Myspace or Twitter; 55% of Chicano/Latino participants stated they used no social networks when selecting a college or university; 43% of Native American student participants used Facebook to assist in the college selection process, while 57% of Native American participants indicated they used no social networks to select their college or university. Data obtained from multiracial participants were found to be similar to Asian-American participants; 70% of multiracial participants heavily used Facebook in the college selection process, while 30% indicated they used no social networks to select their college or university (see Tables 29).

Table 29

Percent of Participant Utilization of Social Networks by Ethnicity

	Facebook	Myspace	Twitter	Blogs	None
African-American	42	0	3	3	68
Asian American Pacific Islander	70	0	0	0	30
Chicano/Latino	38	3	3	0	55
Native American/Alaskan Native	43	0	0	0	57
Multiracial	70	0	0	0	30

Most students reported that they used other means of researching their college or university prior to selection; however, most participants failed to provide what additional resources were used. Of the students that utilized the technology means listed, most student's utilized correspondence with current or former students as the primary resource for learning about the college or university; 23% of female participants and 26% of all male participants indicated that they utilized this resource when selecting their institution. This was followed by becoming a fan or friend of the campus online. This is directly related to the use of Facebook as the primary resource used by participants; 15% of all female participants and 21% of all male participants indicated that they used this tool as a resource prior to selecting their college or university. Additional data should be obtained to access what additional resources students to learn about their prospective institution(s) of choice may have used (see Tables 30 and 31).

Table 30

Percent of Participant Utilization of Technology

Technology	Female	Male
Became a fan/friend of the campus online	15	21
Corresponded with current or former students	23	26
Followed updates from admissions office staff	11	4
Corresponded with faculty or staff	9	7
Other	39	35

Table 31

Percent of Participant Use of Technology by Ethnicity

	Became a fan/friend of the campus online	Corresponded with current or former students	Followed updates from admissions office staff	Corresponded with faculty or staff	Other
African-American	16	32	3	6	42
Asian-American Pacific Islander	10	20	0	50	20
Chicano/Latino	21	17	17	0	38
Native American/Alaskan Native	14	14	29	0	29
Multiracial	20	30	0	0	50

College Selection and Family Support

RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and family support?

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between college selection and family support. Family support was also measured against other independent variables including advisement. Significance was determined at the .05 level. The analysis of the data identified a statistically significant relationship between college selection and family support. Further analysis also identified a statistically significant relationship between family support and advisement. Table 32 shows the results of the Pearson Correlation.

Table 32

Pearson Correlation: Family Support

FamilySupp	Pearson Correlation	.349**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	86

To further analyze the correlation between family support and factors effecting college selection, a Pearson Correlation was conducted between Family Support and Advisement. Survey questions (a) I received college guidance from my high school guidance counselor, (b) my guidance counselor provided information on selective colleges and universities, and (c) my parents or guidance counselor informed me about my eligibility for selective colleges or universities were similar (see Table 33). Significance was determined at the .05 level.

Table 33

Pearson Correlation: Family Support and Advisement

FamilySupp	Pearson Correlation	.417**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	86

The relationship between Advisement and Family support was a logical result as both variables asked very similar questions, and therefore measured very similar components of the college selection process. Participants who answered positively to questions 17 and 18 were expected to respond positively to questions 32 and 33.

College Selection and Persistence

RQ10: Is there a significant relationship between Gates Millennium Scholar college selection and their commitment to persist?

A Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between college selection and persistence. Persistence was measured against all other independent variables. Significance was determined at the .05 level. The analysis determined that persistence was not significantly related to college selection. Table 34 shows the results of the Pearson Correlation.

Table 34

Pearson Correlation: Persistence

Persistence	Pearson Correlation	-.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.643
	N	87

Qualitative Phase

The participants. The second phase of the study was focused on the experiences of participants as they chose their college or university to attend. This section was designed to answer the following questions:

- How do Gates Millennium Scholars describe the primary factors that influenced their college selection choice?
- What common themes emerged among Gates Millennium Scholars related to satisfaction of college selection?

The qualitative portion of the study was conducted with Gates Millennium Scholars who provided contact information through the survey portion of the study. These students were contacted through Facebook and asked to participate in the study. Once the students completed the survey component they were sent a second email to solicit participation in the focus group component of the study. Students were asked to provide their email address to determine ethnicity and gender of focus group participants. Data were obtained regarding the number of emails sent to original survey participants and the number of students who responded to the focus group email, as well as those who successfully participated in the focus group.

Of the original 87 participants, 7 students were selected to participate in the Focus Group portion of the study. Of the 7 participants 2 students identified as Asian Pacific Islander, 4 students identified as Chicano Latino, and 1 student identified as African-American; 4 males and 3 females participated in the focus group; 6 participants identified as freshman and 1 participant identified as a senior; 4 students identified as a first-generation college attendee, while 3 students identified as non-first-generation (see Table 35).

At the beginning of the focus group students were asked to read along as the researcher read the informed consent document. Students were then given an opportunity to opt out of the study if they chose. Students were informed of the confidentiality of the survey and told that their initials would be used throughout the study if names were used. In addition, students were asked to provide their email address in a separate chat box for analysis of gender and ethnicity purposes.

Table 35

Focus Group Demographics

Participant	College Enrolled	Ethnicity	Gender	Classification	First Generation/ Non-First Generation
					Generation
1	University of California, Riverside	Chicano/Latino	Male	Freshman	First Generation
2	Colorado School of Mines	Chicano/Latino	Female	Freshman	First Generation
3	Barnard College	Asian American- Pacific Islander	Female	Freshman	First Generation
4	University of South Florida	African-American	Male	Senior	Non-First Generation
5	University of Oregon	Asian American Pacific Islander	Female	Freshman	Non-First Generation
6	University of Texas at El Paso	Chicano Latino	Male	Freshman	First Generation
7	University of Portland	Chicano Latino	Male	Freshman	Non-First Generation

The focus group was audio recorded, and then transcribed within one week of the focus group. The focus group followed a structured format with predetermined questions. Additional questions were asked for clarification purposes as appropriate. The following questions were asked of each participant involved in the qualitative phase:

1. What school do you attend?
2. Who assisted you with selecting a college?
 - a. Did your college host information sessions or recruitment fairs at your high school?

- b. How instrumental was your guidance counselor in your college selection process?
3. When considering your parents, friends, and family, how involved were these individuals in your selection of a college?
4. Are you satisfied with the school you chose?
 - a. If given the opportunity would you have selected a different college or university?
5. Do you have any plans to transfer?
6. When considering your peers, how would you rank your college? (More selective, less selective) Why?
7. What is your understanding of the Gates Millennium Scholars program?
8. When were you notified about your receipt of the scholarship?
9. How would you rank the level of advisement you received after receiving the scholarship?
10. In your opinions, how easy was the transition into the Gates Millennium Scholarship program?
11. If you could provide any feedback to the Gates Foundation regarding college selection what would that be?

Analysis of qualitative interview responses. Interviews were carefully transcribed within one week of the focus group conclusion. Once all focus group responses were completed and transcribed, each participant responses were analyzed individually.

Themes were identified as they emerged through each participant's response (see Appendix D).

Chapter VI integrates data from the qualitative and quantitative components of the research study. Finding from the study along with previous literature are discussed. Implications for future policy and practice are also discussed.

Summary of qualitative findings. Each student was asked to provide details on how they selected their college. The focus group was coded by line, grouped by question, recorded, and reviewed for similarities. Details of common themes identified in the focus group are in Appendix D. Column 2 lists the refined codes determined after coding by question and column 3 identifies the themes that were identified after analysis of the recorded focus group conversation.

Dominant Themes

Ten dominant themes appeared during the focus group: Family support, Advisement, Diversity, Proximity to home, and notification time.

Family Support

Many of the participants in the study indicated that one of the primary reasons they selected their college or university was the support they received from their parents and other family members. One student indicated that her mother directly influenced her to consider one school in particular:

Um, I actually chose to go to an all women's college and that wasn't like the first thing on my mind when I was considering colleges, but umm my mom actually she was like you should look at colleges in New York since I'm from New York.

Um, and some of the good colleges in New York are obviously are obviously Columbia, but that's kind of a long shot cause it is an Ivy League and so I thought like you know what else is there in New York that I would be that I felt was appealing. And I went to the Zip Barnard obviously cause I mean I'm only an hour away and so had a great campus and so I think yeah I think my mom pretty much had a big impact on like what I chose at the end. (Student #3, personal communication, January 5, 2016)

In addition to direct advice from their parents, many students indicated that their parents provided advice on the types of colleges that should be considered and support throughout the college selection process that influenced their selection of a college:

My parents offered me great advice; in fact, they were the only ones to do so. I chose not to involve my friends and extended family in my decision-making process because I already knew what they were going to say: to leave town. (Student #6, personal communication, January 5, 2016)

Advisement

Participants in the focus group were questioned specifically about various types of advisement throughout the college selection process. Students were asked to describe the level and type of advisement they received from family/friends/relatives, counselors, and other stakeholders. In addition, students were asked to describe the level of advisement they received from the Gates Millennium Scholars program prior to and after receiving the scholarship:

The level of advisement dramatically increased after receiving this scholarship. It was as if everyone suddenly wanted to play a part in deciding my future. It was exhausting. I remember I couldn't have a conversation with someone without them mentioning my college decision or the scholarship at least twice. I felt like everyone knew what I should do when I didn't. Slowly but surely, I felt myself being swayed by everyone's advice, and that's when I realized I had had enough. I had to make a decision, and I had to make it on my own. (Student #6, personal communications, January 5, 2016)

Um, before I got the Gates Millennium Scholarship um when I submitted the application on January 11th I think it was um the day that it was due um they told me that early March um they were going to get back to me about if I was a finalist. In early March they got back to me. And then they told me uh when I submitted the documents they said that mid April they were going to get back to me if I was a Gates scholar and they got back to me in mid April. So, they were very on point as far as when they said they were going to modify the students and then after the um being a Gates scholar every time that there's something that needs to go out um, I always get an um an email first and then I uh I get it the modifications through the mail, but I'm always getting um emails from the Gates Millennium Scholars program about programs about what things to get involved with especially because I also created an account at uh as a GMS mentoring which is also very, very helpful. So, I'm always getting modifications about

programs through out the Gates. (Student #4, personal communications, January 5, 2016)

Diversity

Participants in the study mentioned the issue of diversity and culture as it relates to the total climate of the institutions they selected. Many students identified their minority status as a factor that either heavily effected their decision to attend a college or university or as a factor that is (or has) impacted their views on their choice to enroll:

Yes, this is Israel speaking. Um, I come from originally was it's a big Hispanic community. It's like purely Latino almost like no other diversity really around. So, when I came to UCR and learning that it was one of um the most diverse campuses that are. I like I saw so many different types of cultures. I saw many different types of people and to me it actually love that. I love meeting people of different backgrounds because I get to learn like different experiences through them, but I did feel kind of out of place seeing that I was one of the smaller numbers um compared to the other large groups that are here. So, it was very different um seeing the kind of people I did meet and everything. Um but even then I still enjoyed meeting the type of people I know today. (Student #1, personal communications, January 5, 2016)

Oh, um so how I selected my school was ok I've always told myself I was going to be an engineer so I might as well go to a school that is um its an engineering school. So, not taking into consideration other stuff like oh well how is the culture there um I went in and when I was in my first month it was a huge culture

shock cause um Colorado school of Mines lacks diversity big time like you go everywhere there's a small population of minorities um in my class there were a handful of first generation so it makes you feel out of place so there's been a few times when I've considered like you know maybe I should transfer. I should come back to my home state where um maybe I feel more comfortable with the atmosphere, the environment. So, things like that where I should have considered when I was selecting my school I'm considering it now. (Student #3, personal communications, January 5, 2016)

Proximity to Home

The theme participants referred to most often was proximity of their school to their home. Participants indicated that the proximity of their school to their family and friends, particularly parents, was important in deciding which school they would like to attend:

Um, I actually chose to go to an all women's college and that wasn't like the first thing on my mind when I was considering colleges, but umm my mom actually she was like you should look at colleges in New York since I'm from New York. Um, and some of the good colleges in New York are obviously are obviously Columbia, but that's kind of a long shot cause it is an Ivy League and so I thought like you know what else is there in New York that I would be that I felt was appealing. And I went to the Zip Barnard obviously cause I mean I'm only an hour away and so had a great campus and so I think yeah I think my mom pretty

much had a big impact on like what I chose at the end. (Student #3, personal communications, January 5, 2016)

Notification time

Participants in the study also indicated that the timing of receipt of acceptance as a Gates Millennium scholar also effects the selection of a college or university. Students applied for the Gates Millennium Scholars program in January of each year. They are typically notified of their acceptance as a finalist by March of the same year and are notified of their final acceptance by late April. Many students go on to attend college the following August. Participants in the study suggested earlier notification to assist students with potentially being able to applied to a more broad and diverse set of colleges beyond those they can afford prior to receiving the Gates Millennium Scholarship:

I think if they can um announce the scholarship recipients a little bit earlier because for I the I was notified like late April. I remember there was a couple of like a week before the deadline for accepting um my college and I couldn't accept it because if I did I uh had to I think I had to pay like \$200 just to reserve my spot. (Student #2, personal communications, January 5, 2016)

Summary

Analysis of the data determined that Family Support was statistically significant in selection of a college or university. In addition, a statistically significant relationship between Family Support and Advisement was also identified. Analysis of the qualitative data determined that Family support, Advisement, Diversity, Proximity to home, and notification time were all dominant themes expressed commonly among participants in

the study. This chapter described the setting in which the study was conducted, participants in the study, and analyzed the data in relation to predetermined research questions. Chapter VI reviews the findings of the study and provides conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the study.

CHAPTER VI

FINDING, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between college selection and socioeconomic status, cost, high school GPA, family support, need for achievement, self-efficacy, persistence, advisement, and technology of Gates Millennium Scholars. Analysis of the data determined that family support was significantly related to college selection. In addition, analysis of the data determined that advisement and family support were also significantly related. The qualitative component of the study identified several themes including Family support, Advisement, Diversity, Proximity to home, and Notification Time.

This chapter focuses on the major findings identified throughout the study. Recommendations are made based on the data analysis and are intended to develop the framework for positively impacting the college selection of undergraduate minority students. Although the study participants are Gates Millennium Scholars, it is the intention of the researcher that this study be used to positively impact the college selection process for all minority students. Conclusions are made based on the data and findings. Implications of the study are also outlined and explained within this chapter.

Implications

The purpose of the study was to gain insight into the factors that effect college selection for low income minority students. Although the study explored several factors that may impact college selection including: socioeconomic status, need for achievement, self-efficacy, high school GPA, persistence, family support, advisement, cost, and student use of technology, the quantitative and qualitative data show the factors that were most influential to students college selection were family support, advisement, and proximity to home.

This finding has implications for high schools, colleges, and universities, specifically educational leaders. High schools are responsible with ensuring students receive the necessary support to not only complete high school, but achieve college and career readiness. Along with this comes the responsibility that students receive the information about multiple colleges and universities to which their academic accomplishments align. Long gone are the days of simply focusing on a student's ability to complete high school. High schools must now ensure students are able to succeed beyond high school completion.

Similarly, colleges and universities must develop a vested interest in understanding the factors that influence college selection. This is of utmost importance for low income minority students who may not have the tools and resources necessary to reach out to the institution themselves. This implies a need for alternative means of communication between the institution and the student such as technology driven campus tours among other resources. Understanding how this student population gathers

information about a school and how they ultimately select a college or university is an important component in further developing the recruitment and admission status of these students. This study provides a greater understanding that has far reaching implications for education at all levels that can assist in increasing the effectiveness of the college selection process for a highly capable group of students.

As institutions move further away from the term *in loco parentis* or “in place of a parent” it is important to understand the needs of low income minority students, many of whom may be first generation college attendees. The results of this study suggest that minority students rely heavily on advisement when selecting a college or university. Specifically, the results from the quantitative component show that students who select tier 2 and tier 3 schools are generally influenced heavily by their parents. More than 50% of these parents had never attended college. This suggests the need for advisement for these students and their parents. Perhaps these parents feel their children are safer when close to home. By understanding these trends, colleges and universities may be able to ensure these students receive the supplementary resources and programs necessary to ensure their success, particularly through the eyes of their parent or support systems.

Results of the quantitative component of the study suggest that college recruitment professionals should focus on identifying individuals within the community that are critical in the college selection process for minority students. Students in the focus group component identified many advisement sources outside their high school. While teachers were recognized as an important source of advisement, many participants stated their counselor was not helpful when selecting a college or university. If

community and teacher advisement are important to students, relationships should be created with these individuals. Again, these results suggest a need for different tactics when appealing to low income, minority students.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Educational Leaders

- Proper training and development of high school guidance counselors should be implemented. Further effort is needed to ensure counselors receive the proper training to not only assist students with completing high school, but are also equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to select an institution that meets their academic and professional needs.
- Educational leaders facilitate the development of exposure opportunity through creation of community partnerships.
- Educational leaders should ensure funds are appropriately allocated to address the issue of college and career readiness. Allotting additional funding for training and development opportunities for students may result in an increase in student satisfaction postgraduation and a greater number of students reporting positive education and career attainment postgraduation.
- A shift in counselor hiring to focus on individuals experienced in admission and recruitment at the post secondary level should be implemented, particularly in high needs high schools.

Recommendations for Secondary Educators

- Financial literacy is a skill that should begin at the middle school or high school level. Students, parents, and other stakeholders should be made aware of the implications of the financial aspect of the college selection and attendance process.
- Students should be encouraged to apply for multiple funding sources when completing the college application process.
- Secondary Educators should implement workshops to ensure adequate preparation and education for parents and other stakeholders. Students and their families should be educated holistically on the financial implications of the college selection process and the implications finances have on a student's ability to attend the college or university of his or her choice.

Recommendations for High School Guidance Counselors

- High school guidance counselors should encourage students to research and attend appropriate colleges that align with their academic credentials.
- The application and admission process should be at the forefront of required responsibilities for high school guidance counselors. Thus, preparing students for the application cycle should occur early within the application year. Early application may lead to early acceptance for students.
- A shared responsibility for community and college partnerships should also be a requirement for high school guidance counselors.

- Finally, guidance counselors should promote student exploration of colleges and universities outside the local area, while ensuring students are exposed to a range of institutions throughout the world.

Recommendations for the Gates Millennium Scholarship Program

- The Gates Millennium Scholarship program should be viewed as a model for other scholarship program, specifically scholarship programs targeting high achieving minority students.
- Additional scholarships should be established in similar practice to increase access for high achieving minority students.
- Early intervention programs are a necessity when developing minority and low-income students. The Gates Millennium Scholarship program should conduct a needs assessment to ensure quality of care for at risk student populations.
- Lastly, new Bill and Melinda Gates funded scholarship programs should examine the timeline for application and selection of students. Consideration should be made for students beginning college in the Fall, and care should be taken to provide early notification of scholarship recipients.

Recommendations for Parents

- Parents should become an active participant in their students education and college selection process.

- Parents should attend school functions and opportunities for education as it relates to college selection, college financial planning, and college preparation.
- Parents should encourage their child to research and apply to schools that align with their academic credentials and their needs as a student.
- Parent should provide and support and encouragement for their child to ensure they receive positive feedback throughout their matriculation from high school to college.

Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations are intended to develop a framework for improving college selection and preventing college under match for minority students on a large scale:

- Training for parents and other stakeholders should be available during the student's senior year of college. This training should consist of a brief survey of the student's academic and nonacademic interest as well as prior academic performance.
- In addition, the parents and other stakeholders should complete a survey detailing important factors in selection of a college for their student. Based on this information a profile of schools matching these interests should be developed and presented to the student and stakeholder.
- These schools should be representative of schools in state, out of state, public institutions, and private institutions

Recommendations for Policy

- Colleges and universities that implement Affirmative Action policies should be aware of the implications for high achieving students with low income and resources. It is imperative that policy makers consider the implications for minority students as well as others students who have historically been adversely impacted by educational policies and practices.
- Mandatory reporting of Gainful Employment statistics should be further implemented. Colleges and universities should be mandated to disclosure rates of student's median debt, median income, graduate rates, and default rates, prior to enrollment. Students should have access to this information in a clearly articulated and easily understood manner throughout the college selection and enrollment process.

Recommendations for Further Research

- Additional research regarding minority student performance at highly selective colleges and universities seems necessary. Many of these schools have mission and vision statements that vary widely and are dependent on the academic goals of the institution. These schools are highly unique and will require individualized classification and grouping to identify areas of improvement necessary to recruit and retain minority students.
- Further research should be conducted to understand the implications of first generation college status on college selection. It may be beneficial to understand how students without parents or other stakeholders who have

previously attended college gain the support and resources necessary to not only gain access to colleges, but also the tools and resources necessary to graduate.

- Further research on current Gate Millennium Scholars cohorts through a qualitative study would be beneficial. This study should examine matriculation of scholars and the impact of their college selection choices on their employability after graduation.
- Further, an inquiry specific to students who applied, but did not receive the Gates Millennium scholarship would be significant. Contacting applicants for the scholarship that were not successful may provide insight on the financial component as it relates to selecting a college or university. In addition, this may provide further identification of additional resources and tools available to assist minority students through the college selection process.

Conclusions

Analysis of the data found that Family Support was a strong indicator of college selection among Gates Millennium Scholars. In addition, Family Support and Advisement were found to be statistically related. Survey and focus group participants agreed that their family was highly important in the decision to attend a particular college or university. If highly selective colleges and universities are to recruit and retain high achieving minority students there is a clearly a need to appeal to and provide education to the family and other stakeholders.

While participants in the study identified a few areas for improvement all participants in the study expressed extreme gratitude for their ability to receive and participate in the scholarship program. They understand that no organization or program is perfect, but they have been given a unique opportunity to fulfill their educational and professional goals. Participants in the study have a commitment to their educational advancement and generally expressed satisfaction with their educational choices. Practice and policy implementations based on the data analysis of the qualitative and quantitative components of the study would likely assist minority students with exposure beyond their immediate communities while hopefully improving the quality of the institutions that Gates Millennium Scholars and other minority students attend.

APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

Thank you for your participation in this research study. Please answer each question honestly.

I. Demographic Information

1. Please indicate your gender.
 - a. Male ☐
 - b. Female ☐
 - c. Transgender ☐
 - d. Decline to identify ☐

2. Please indicate your ethnicity.
 - a. African-American ☐
 - b. Asian-American/ Pacific Islander ☐
 - c. Chicano/Latino ☐
 - d. Native American/ Alaskan Native ☐
 - e. Multi Racial ☐
 - f. Other ☐
 - g. Decline to identify ☐

3. Please indicate your current classification:
 - a. Freshman ☐
 - b. Sophomore ☐
 - c. Junior ☐
 - d. Senior ☐

4. Please indicate the highest level of education for each of your parents.

	Mother	Father
Less than a High School Diploma	O	O
High School Diploma	O	O
Some College	O	O
Associate's Degree	O	O
Bachelors Degree	O	O
Graduate or Professional Degree	O	O

SURVEY KEY:					
Strongly Agree = SA	Agree = A		Neutral = N		
Disagree = D	Strongly Disagree = SD				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Socioeconomic Status					
5. I received Pell Grant for the 2015-2016 Academic year.					
6. My parents are able to provide financial support towards my educational expenses.					
7. I work to pay for a portion or all of my educational expenses.					
8. My parents or primary caregiver has been unemployed since I have been in college.					
Cost	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. I find the cost of attendance at my college to be expensive.					
10. Prior to receiving the Gates Millennium Scholarship I did not know how I would pay for school.					
11. I feel uneasy about the cost of my education.					
High School GPA	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. My cumulative GPA was more than 3.5 in high school.					
13. I graduated in the top 10% of my high school class.					
14. I felt confident in my ability to meet the requirements for the Gates Millennium Scholarship.					
Family Support	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. My parents or caregiver has visited me at my college.					
16. I regularly speak to my parents or caregiver about my college experience.					
17. My parents or caregiver took me to visit colleges and universities prior to selecting a college or university.					
18. My parents or caregiver assisted me in selecting a college or university.					
Need for Achievement	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. My school work is my top priority.					
20. I took AP classes in high school.					
21. I believe my college or university is the right fit for me academically.					
22. I ask for assistance from teachers or peers if I do not understand an assignment.					
Self Efficacy	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. When facing a difficult task I am often proactive in handling the situation.					
24. I have the tendency to shy away from difficult situations.					
25. When encountering a challenge I prefer to avoid the situation.					
Persistence	SA	A	N	D	SD
26. I plan to enroll in my current college next year.					
27. I plan to graduate from college on time.					
28. I am considering transferring to another institution next semester.					
29. I sometimes doubt my decision to enroll at my current school.					
30. I do not feel my current school is a good fit for me.					

Advisement				SA	A	N	D	SD
31. I received college guidance from my high school guidance counselor.								
32. My guidance counselor provided information on selective colleges and universities.								
33. My parents or guidance counselor informed me about my eligibility for selective colleges or universities.								
Recruitment	Utilized	Very Influential	Somewhat Influential	Slightly Influential	Not At All Influential			
Please indicate the sources you utilized in your college search process and their level of impact on your selection.								
34. College admission counselor visits to my high school.								
35. Campus tour (s).								
36. High school guidance counselor.								
37. Overnight stays on campus.								
38. Summer enrichment programs on campus.								

Please indicate the relative effect of the following factors on your college selection.

II. Technology

39. In your college search/selection process, did you use any of the following social networks?

- a. Facebook ☐
- b. Myspace ☐
- c. Twitter ☐
- d. Blogs ☐
- e. None ☐

40. In what ways did you use social networking sites?

- a. Became a fan/friend of the campus online. ☐
- b. Corresponded with current or former students. ☐
- c. Followed updates from admissions office staff. ☐
- d. Corresponded with faculty or staff. ☐
- e. Other _____ ☐

APPENDIX B

Student Focus Group Protocol

Study: FACTORS AFFECTING INSTITUTION SELECTION FOR UNDERGRADUATE GATES MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS

Date: _____

Time: Start_____ **Stop**_____

Physical Location: _____

Campus Building: _____

Interviewed by: _____

Note to interviewee

Thank you for your participation! Your input will have a significant impact on the research by providing insight on the college's recruitment process for low income, minority students. Your confidentiality will be maintained at all times and your identity will remain anonymous.

Approximate length of interview: 45 minutes

Purpose of research

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between college selection and factors such as socioeconomic status, cost, self-efficacy, family support, advisement, need for achievement, high school GPA, persistence, and cost. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a student at a highly selective college or university and have been selected for the Gates Millennium Scholarship Program.

What school do you attend?

1. Who assisted you with selecting a college?
 - a. Did your college host information sessions or recruitment fairs at your high school?
 - b. How instrumental was your guidance counselor in your college selection process?
2. When considering your parents, friends, and family how involved were these individuals in your selection of a college?
3. Are you satisfied with the school you chose?
 - a. If given the opportunity would you have selected a different college or university?
4. Do you have any plans to transfer?
5. When considering your peers, how would you rank your college? (More selective, less selective) Why?
6. What is your understanding of the Gates Millennium Scholars program?
7. When were you notified about your receipt of the scholarship?
8. How would you rank the level of advisement you received after receiving the scholarship?
9. In your opinions, how easy was the transition into the Gates Millennium Scholarship program?
10. If you could provide any feedback to the Gates Foundation regarding college selection what would that be?

APPENDIX C

Tier Distribution by Criteria and College

Tier	Criteria	College/Number of Participants
1	Endowment: 1 Billion or more Graduation Rate: 90% or higher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York University (2) • Yale University (1) • Emory University (2) • University of Texas at Austin (1) • Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1) • Columbia University (2) • University of Michigan (1) • Johns Hopkins University (1) • University of Washington (1) • University of California, Davis (3) • Pomona College (2) • Berkeley (2) • University of California, Los Angeles (2) • University of Florida (2) • Amherst College (1) • Brown University (1) • New York University (1) • University of Southern California • Cornell (1) • Northwestern University (2) • Princeton University (1) • University of Rochester (1) • George Washington University(1)
2	Endowment: Less than 1 billion- 100 million Graduation Rate: 55%-90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Miami (3) • Carleton College (1) • Virginia Tech (1) • Barnard College (1) • Spelman (2) • University of Utah (1) • University of Georgia (2) • Worcester Polytechnic Institute (1) • Mercer (1) • Providence College (1) • California Polytechnic State University (1) • University of Wyoming (1) • Fordham University (1)

Tier	Criteria	College/Number of Participants
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida Atlantic University(2) • University of California, Riverside(1) • University of Portland(1) • University of Missouri(1) • University of California, Irvine(1) • University of North Texas(1) • Gonzaga University(1) • Colorado State(1) • Drexel (2) • Georgia State University(1) • Willamette University(1) • Texas State(1) • University of Alabama(1) • Northern Arizona University(1) • Morehouse(1) • Oregon University(1) • University of California, San Diego(1) • University of South Florida(1) • Colorado School of Mines(1) • Kent State University(1) • Oberlin College(1) • University of the Incarnate Word(1)
3	Endowment: Less than 100 million Graduate Rate: Less than 55%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Wisconsin River Falls(1) • West Texas A & M University(1) • University of Central Oklahoma(1) • Northeastern State University(1) • George Fox University(2) • Tougaloo College(1) • High Point University(1) • Northern State University(1) • Indiana University(1) • Christopher Newport University(1) • University of Texas El Paso(1) • Stevenson University(1) • Long Island University(1)

APPENDIX D

Qualitative Coded Themes

	<i>Refined Codes</i>	<i>Overall Themes</i>
<i>Question 1</i>		
<i>Question 2</i>	College recruitment Parent/Family influence Program of study Teachers Counselors Campus based programs College advisors (admissions)	Family support Advisement Diversity
<i>Question 3</i>	Family obligations Parent involvement/influence Teachers Counselors Proximity Ethnicity Diversity Culture Atmosphere School Climate	Family support Proximity to home
<i>Question 4</i>	Inclusion Diversity Culture Program of study Atmosphere Institution size	Proximity to home Diversity
<i>Question 5</i>	Diversity Academic Reputation/Rankings Student population Proximity Parental influence	Diversity Proximity to home
<i>Question 6</i>	Academic reputation/rankings Program of study Admission/enrollment requirements Majors Resources Retention	Advisement

	<i>Refined Codes</i>	<i>Overall Themes</i>
<i>Question 7</i>	Support Diversity Culture Academic Performance Resources Eligibility Financial Aid/Cost Reputation	Advisement
<i>Question 8</i>	Proximity Culture Environment Admission/Enrollment Resources Campus Tour Resources Family	Family Support
<i>Question 9</i>	Academics Program of study Resources Admission/Enrollment	
<i>Question 10</i>	Support Resources Culture Diversity Climate Family support Academic preparation Parent/Family opinions Financial Aid/Cost Academic/Professional Preparation	Diversity
<i>Question 11</i>	Notification time Support Programs and Services Resources Academic/Professional Preparation Diversity Climate Admission/Enrollment	Notification time

APPENDIX E

Statement of Consent: Student

RESEARCH TITLE

FACTORS AFFECTING INSTITUTION SELECTION FOR UNDERGRADUATE GATES
MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER

Whitney Payton

PURPOSE

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between college selection and factors such as socioeconomic status, cost, self-efficacy, family support, advisement, need for achievement, high school GPA, persistence, and cost. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a current Gates Millennium Scholar in years one, two, three, or four at one of the selected colleges chosen for this study. A total of 100 participants will be recruited for the study. A randomized incentive will be provided.

PROCEDURES

Participation in this study requires answering all of the questions on the College Selection Survey through the Survey Monkey website. During the survey, you are asked not to interact with any other participants. The research will take place during the fall semester of the 2015 academic year.

RISK

Participation in this research study will not subject you to any risk. All data collected will be confidential.

BENEFITS

Participation in this research will qualify you for the opportunity to be considered for a randomized incentive. Participation does not guarantee selection for the incentive. Your participation in this study will also assist the researcher with determining if college selection for low income minority students is impacted by socioeconomic status, cost, self-efficacy, family support, advisement, need for achievement, high school GPA, or persistence. Your participation in this study will yield invaluable insight for college recruitment and admissions staff and college leaders. In addition, your feedback may impact college recruitment processes for other minority students.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your participation in this study is not required. You have the right to remove yourself and cease participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to remove yourself from the study will in no way negatively impact you. You will not face any risk or lose any rights or benefits you were entitled to.

CONFIDENTIALITY

No personally identifiable data will be collected during this study. Your email address will be required only to confirm participation in the study and solidify your chance to be considered for the randomized incentive. The researcher will make every attempt to maintain confidentiality throughout the study. All information from the survey will be summarized and analyzing using discretion.

CONTACT PERSON

For any questions concerning this research study and your participation please contact:

Trevor Turner, Ph.D.
Professor
Clark Atlanta University
Department of Educational Leadership
223 James P. Brawley Drive S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30313
Email: tturner@cau.edu
Phone: (404) 880-8980

COPY OF STATEMENT OF CONSENT FORM TO PARTIPANT

If you understand the terms of the study and this form and are willing to participate, please sign and date below. A copy of this document will be available for your records.

Participant Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Participant Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

Statement of Consent: Student Focus Group

RESEARCH TITLE

FACTORS AFFECTING INSTITUTION SELECTION FOR UNDERGRADUATE GATES
MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER

Whitney Payton

PURPOSE

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between college selection and factors such as socioeconomic status, cost, self-efficacy, family support, advisement, need for achievement, high school GPA, persistence, and cost. You are invited to participate in this study because you are an administrator at a highly selective college or university with knowledge of the recruitment and admission process of Gates Millennium Scholars. Participation will require approximately 45 minutes of your time.

PROCEDURES

Participation in this study requires answering all of the questions asked by the researcher.

RISK

Participation in this research study will not subject you to any risk. All data collected will be confidential.

BENEFITS

Participation in this research benefit your school by providing valuable feedback on the college selection process for highly qualified low income, minority students. The data obtained in this study will provide information necessary for further recruitment of Gates Millennium Scholars and other highly qualified minority students. Participation in this research study will result in an incentive.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your participation in this study is not required. You have the right to remove yourself and cease participation at any time for any reason. Should

you choose to cease participation in this study you will not face any risk or lose any rights or benefits you were entitled to.

CONFIDENTIALITY

No personally identifiable data will be collected during this study. The researcher will make every attempt to keep your name and professional title anonymous.

The data obtained from this study will be shared with the higher education community. This study may also be published. Only Whitney Payton will have access to the information you provide. Your identity will not be disclosed.

CONTACT PERSON

For any questions concerning this research study and your participation please contact:

Trevor Turner, Ph.D.
Professor
Clark Atlanta University
Department of Educational Leadership
223 James P. Brawley Drive S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30313
Email: tturner@cau.edu
Phone: (404) 880-8980

COPY OF STATEMENT OF CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPANT

If you understand the terms of the study and this form and are willing to participate, please sign and date below. A copy of this document will be available for your records.

Participant Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Participant Signature

Date

APPENDIX G

Focus Group Transcript

(Ding - participant 1 joins call)

Interviewer (I):

Ok, we'll go ahead and get started. Umm, so again thank you all for umm agreeing to help me out umm... I'll just go ahead and kind of introduce myself and umm tell you a little about bit about my study and what I'm looking to do umm...so my name is Whitney Payton and umm I am in the Gates class of 2006. So, I received my Gates Millennium Scholarship in 2006. So, I am coming up on my 10 year anniversary next year and I will also be finishing up my program at that time. So, umm this is my last year with Gates Millennium and what I am doing...I am finishing up my dissertation and my research is focused on Gates Millennium Scholars and so what I am looking to uh learn more about is the college selection process for Gates Millennium Scholars. I want to know what that process looks like because I'm sure you all probably had similar umm experiences umm as far as the timing of when you got Gates and the timing of when you probably selected your college. So, um what I want to do is be able to provide some type of feedback to Gates so that they can probably um for this next type of I don't know what this next what the scholarship is going to look like um for the next run. I know this is the last year for this current scholarship but they are planning to do some type of other program moving forward um just to be able to provide some type of feedback so that with that next um scholarship they will be able to provide some type of support for the scholars before they actually get the scholarship so that we can help students when their going through the process of looking for a college or university and uh just making sure they have the support to be able to pick a school that is going to meet their needs. So, that's kind of what where I am. The questions that I have here are pretty uh straight forward. What I want to do is just basically have a conversation with you all and (Participant 1: Ok) hear a little about your transition from high school. I'm not sure how many Freshmen I have on the call, but um just let me know where you are in your studies and if you don't mind sharing what school you are at that would be perfect and then we can kind of go through the questions as they come and I'll just throw out a question and everyone doesn't have to answer each question, but if you want to answer a question you can definitely do that just make sure you let me know who you are so I'll know who I am speaking to.

Participant 1: Ok.

Participant 2: Ok.

I: Ok, so um, the first question is um what school does every body attend?

P1: Umm. Do we say our name or do we just uh?

I: You can just give your first name. You don't have to give your first and last name. You can just say hi my name is John. I went to Spelman.

P1: Ok. So, I guess I'll begin. My first name is Israel and I attend the University of California, Riverside.

I: Ok.
(3 participants talking at once)

P2: Um, my name is Veronica and I'm so sorry. Oh my God (hahaha).

P3: Ok, do you want to go first? Whoever Monica was (hahaha)?

P2: My name is Veronica and uh I attend Colorado School of Mines.
(2 participants talking at once)

P3: My name is Angela and I attend Barnard college.

P4: My name is Daniel and I attend the University of South Florida.

P5: My name is NHU and I attend UNIVERSITY OF OREGON.

P6: My name is Ricardo and I attend The University of Texas at El Paso.

P7: My name is Erikjone and I attend The University of Portland.

I: Ok, I think that's you know every body on the call. I think we only have like 5-6 people. Uh, just to let you all know, I went to Spelman for undergrad. I went to a school that no one has probably ever heard of for my masters. It's called Argosy University, and I'm doing my doctorate at Clark Atlanta University. Umm, so the next question that I have is who, basically I want to know about your how you selected your college or university and so, um if you can just let me know what your classification is and just a little bit about how you the college that you attend.

P1: Ummm..uh Ok. I guess I will start. This is Israel again and the way that I selected ended up selecting a college was I actually ended up getting help outside of my

school because we actually didn't have a guidance counselor uh for colleges like the year that I was going to leave high school and so uh like through a private organization they helped me choose which colleges I believed fit my kind of field of what I like whether it be science, English, history, all that kind of stuff, and so I ended up getting that sort of outside help and eventually led me to choosing UCR. '

P6: Mostly my family. This is because they know what my interests are and what I want to achieve in life.

I: Ok. When you umm when you were picking your school did you go and like did they have anything where you like visited the school before you actually um like started there?

P1: Yeah, I uh I think it was twice I came to visit. One was what they call discovery day and the second day um is called highland day and basically one was like a brief interview well, not interview it was a brief uh like overlook of the school and the second day when I actually came back when it was actually closer to during the school I came back to learn be more specific on the departments and the kind of teachers that they have, how they teach, um the majors, and so we came very general the first time I visited and then the second time I came back more it became more specific on what I was going to involve myself in.

I: Ok. Now, when you um when you were doing this process and other people can feel free to join in as well but it when you were going through this process was this before or after you received notification that you were going to be selected as Gates Scholar?

P2: It was before cause I think I don't know how you guys were, but for me um, it was like days before I even accepted the school I wanted to go to when I got notified about the award and uh yeah my back up plans were like ok yeah if I don't get the Gates I have this school here that's much cheaper and I can afford it.

I: Ok. Did that affect you at all as far as what schools you actually applied to? Um, were you just basically did you have some schools that were much more expensive and or how many schools did you apply to um thinking you were going to get the Gates versus not knowing you were going to get the Gates.

P2: So, I applied for my dream school which is the one I am right now and I applied for it because another friend who got the Gates he was like you should even though you're not sure whether you're going to get it or not um apply for the schools you want to go to cause you know there's a chance that you might get it, but also make sure that you have back up plans so I had like 3 back up plans that were in state, they were much cheaper. I can afford it as opposed to the school where I am going right now where if I didn't get the Gates there was no chance that I was going to go.

- I:** Ok. Does any body remember what month um they were notified that they got the Gates Scholarship?
- P4:** My award letter for the Gates Scholarship that I received said April 16th, but I received it in the mail on April 19th, 2012.
- P6:** I was notified in late April on a Saturday on my way home from the Mexican Buffett. The news only enhanced the joyous day I was already having. I remember I got the mail out from our P.O. Box. It wasn't until I opened the large envelope in the car that I started crying. I remember I was in shock for about two weeks. I still didn't know how to approach my new situation. I didn't realize the magnitude of the award until I realized that I could actually attend the colleges that, for a long time, I had already ruled out because I could not afford them. It was a great experience.
- I:** Ok. Ok. And then classes uh you know started in August. Right?
- P4:** Yeah, classes started in August.
- I:** Ok. So, yeah. That's kind of what I what I wanted to do. You know kind of look at as far as giving some feedback to Gates that you know the process. You know, with the scholarship being due in January it does kind of pigeon hole some students who may have applied to schools you know, a lot, not every student probably applied to schools that were more expensive as well as schools that were you know less expensive. They may have planned according to what they could afford not knowing that they would get Gates. So, that's another, you know little area of feedback that I want to give to Gates as well.
- I:** Ok. So umm (Participant?: Ok), does any body else want to umm answer the question about how they selected their college?
- P7:** I selected my college on own. It was basically a personal choice, but my family was pretty involved since I wanted to still be relatively close to them, additionally a cousin of mine already attended my first choice college so she encouraged me to attend.
- P4:** Uh, I selected. Well, I'm from Immokalee, Florida. Not too many people probably have heard of Immokalee, but it's a very small agricultural community outside of the Florida everglades. And where I'm from, not too many people go to high school or go to college. And so, when I was applying to college um there was only uh one recruiter from the University of South Florida who was helping magnet students apply to college. And me being a magnet student myself I attended all her workshops and everything and she was very helpful and me not having that role model in my community that that I can say that went to college and made

something for himself um I was just going on faith the whole time um being one of the few in my in my whole community to go to college being the first in my family uh and so I only applied to in state schools um just to be safe um because I was going to get in state tuition and um after being that relationship with the college assistant magnet program at the University of South Florida I felt comfortable at going to USF. So um, I committed to USF before I learned about the Gates um and then after I learned about the Gates I kind of wish that I kind of would have applied um out of state like a big school like Georgia Tech or Harvard or the Ivy league.

I: Ok, and tell me your name your first name.

P4: Um, Daniel.

I: Daniel, ok. So, Daniel how do you feel now. Are you a Freshman?

I: No, I'm in my fourth year now. Oh, Oh. Congratulations! So, now that you're coming up on that graduation time just looking back over it are you happy with the decision you made to go to the school that you're at right now?

P4: Yeah, I'm very happy with my decision um my 4 years of USF have been incredible. I studied abroad. I I've held a few internships. Um, and I've you know got involved a lot uh especially through uh the Gates scholarship program going to participate in their programs such as you know the alternative spring break program going to um the Institute of Teaching and Mentoring um going to the Freshman conference as a CBL. Um and being involved with the campus based organization that they um at USF it really made it a good dec-um I'm fine with my decision um and now that you know grad school is coming up I'm definitely um convinced that I want to go um out of state.

I: Ok. Awesome. Well, the good thing is that, you know having that opportunity to do graduate school will give you the opportunity to do some of the things that you know you may not have done in undergrad. So, that's great that you have you know this experience, but then having graduate school can be whatever experience that you want to make it. So, that's awesome.

P4: (Can't understand)

I: So, I noticed that I didn't hear a lot of people talk about their high school guidance counselors per se. Um, did any body here have an experience where they worked closely with their high school guidance counselor to um kind of solidify the school that they wanted to go to?

(Quiet)

I: It's ok.

P4: Um, this is Daniel again. Um my guidance counselor they were very helpful. Um through my guidance counselor is how I found out about the Gates Millennium Scholarship. Uh and through my guidance counselor I was able to um take a few tours of all of the Florida schools. Um a few times and learn about the programs they had for high school students. So, that was definitely very helpful um, when I told them I wanted to go to college.

P5: My counselor/mentors in college center and sun school in Madison high school helped me pick a college. My college also hosted an information session during college fair week.

P6: My counselor was not that instrumental. Although he offered some advice, I did not find it personally helpful. I felt that his advice was blinded by the fact that I had recently become a Gates scholar. It was as if he wanted me to leave town just because I didn't have to pay for anything. He failed to grasp that my best option was to remain local due to a great research opportunity I had recently obtained at the local university. It actually came to bother me that he could not comprehend my decision to stay in town.

P7: My counselor was not too instrumental, like I said, choosing what college I attended or applied was mostly a personal choice.

I: Ok. Awesome. So, the next question I have is um its talking a little bit about your network, your parents, your friends, your family. Um how, how um influential do you think your parents, your friends, and your family were in helping you select a college. Did any body have an experience where um you know your parents or your friends or family helped you select a college?

P3: Um, well I can speak to that. Um, this is Angela by the way. Um, I actually chose to go to an all women's college and that wasn't like the first thing on my mind when I was considering colleges, but umm my mom actually she was like you should look at colleges in New York since I'm from New York. Um, and some of the good colleges in New York are obviously are obviously Columbia, but that's kind of a long shot cause it is an Ivy League and so I thought like you know what else is there in New York that I would be that I felt was appealing. And I went to the Zip Barnard obviously cause I mean I'm only an hour away and so had a great campus and so I think yeah I think my mom pretty much had a big impact on like what I chose at the end.

P6: My parents offered me great advice, in fact, they were the only ones to do so. I chose not to involve my friends and extended family in my decision-making process because I already knew what they were going to say: to leave town. I actually made my own decision with minimal outside influences because I wanted

my decision to be just that: MINE. As it turns out, the people who I chose not to include in my decision-making process were the only ones that were angered with my decision. Although some friends were supportive, most were not. Same for my family. They weren't supportive until I told them about the nature of my research related scholarship (which is a full-ride with a monthly research stipend) that they came to support my decision. It was only then that they reassured me that I had made the correct choice.

I: Ok. Angela, what is your classification?

P3: Um, what do you mean classification?

I: Are you uh a Freshman, Sophomore, Junior Senior.

P3: Like. Oh, I'm a Freshman right now actually.

I: Ok. Awesome. Awesome.

P3: Yeah.

I: So did any body else have an experience um where you know where when you're considering your parents, friends, and family how involved were they in the process of helping you select a college?

P5: My parents and family did not help me select a college. They were not involved.

P1: Uh, I could. Uh. This is Israel speaking. I'm actually the complete opposite of what Angela just said. Uh, my parents, they didn't necessarily uh really give me any influence on helping what college I wanted to choose because they always told me that if there was a college that I really enjoyed or that I really liked to they weren't going to force upon me to like limit my uh region of which college I wanted to go to so, they let me choose wherever I wanted to because we like we saw how other parents could be if they restricted their um children to a certain college or something. And so they didn't want to be that way or feel like they had like made the wrong decision if they had done so. So they let me choose freely on what college I wanted to actually go for. And as for family and outer family and my actual friends um they were basically the same thing. Like, cause I actually came here by myself. None of my high school friends are here currently with me and so it was more of ah like a solo type mission where I had to just look out to see what college I could find to fit me perfectly or at least will fit me the best in that sense. And so, it was a bit more challenging seeing that I had an outside help who wasn't necessarily close to me but still ended up helping me decide what college I wanted to go to choose.

I: Ok. Any body else um want to answer that question?

(Quiet)

I: So, the next question says “are you satisfied with the school you chose? I know um we talked a little bit about that and some people you know said that they were really you know I’ve heard that you know I went to my top choice and I heard some other people you know talk about possibly you know applying to different schools based on them not knowing when they were going to if they were going to be selected for the uh for the scholarship, but is there anyone that is not satisfied with the school that they chose?

(Two People talking at once)

P2: Um, this is Veronica again. Uh, go ahead guys.

P4: Go ahead Veronica.

P2: Oh, um so how I selected my school was ok I’ve always told myself I was going to be an engineer so I might as well go to a school that is um its an engineering school. So, not taking into consideration other stuff like oh well how is the culture there um I went in and when I was was my first month it was a huge culture shock cause um Colorado school of Mines lacks diversity big time like you go everywhere there’s a small population of minorities um in my class there were a handful of first generation so it makes you feel out of place so there’s been a few times when I’ve considered like you know maybe I should transfer. I should come back to my home state where um maybe I feel more comfortable with the atmosphere, the environment. So, things like that where I should have considered when I was selecting my school I’m considering it now.

I: Ok. Does anyone else have.

P4: This is Daniel.

I: Ok.

P4: This is Daniel. Um, After my Sophomore year um I did um want to transfer um cause I wanted to leave Florida. Um so I had applied to Texas A&M and Georgia Tech and I got into both um and I decided to transfer to Georgia Tech, but when I got there was uh um my credits didn’t transfer in so I was going into my Junior year and then they said that because the program was different the curriculums were different I had to um retake some classes um and I dec I uh uh said I nah I don’t I don’t want to do that so um I decided you know not to take up the offer um at Georgia tech anymore and I decided to just stay at my school at USF, but I did want

to transfer. I did plan um I did apply to transfer, but because of my credits I decided to stay at USF, but I um I um now I'm happy with um USF.

- P6:** Yes, although I sometimes wonder what it would have been like to leave town. I often ponder on why I was rejected to the schools I really wanted to go to, but then I see how comfortable my life is at my institution and how many opportunities it offers. I'm very excited to have been accepted into the program I was accepted into because I have been able to make copious lasting relationships with students who share my scientific ambitions. I know that I would have not had the opportunities that I do now at another institution.
- P5:** I'm very satisfied with my school. I would not select another school of I were given the opportunity to select another university.
- P7:** I am absolutely 100% satisfied with my school of choice. I do not think I would have selected another university if I had the chance.
- I:** Um k. Did anybody else experience um like cultural differences by you know based on where you're maybe where you're from or um any type of you know your own family situation and then coming to to your college. Did anybody else have like a cultural you know kind of shock?
- P1:** Yes, this is Israel speaking. Um, I come from originally was it's a big Hispanic community. It's like purely Latino almost like no other diversity really around. So, when I came to UCR and learning that it was one of um the most diverse campuses that are. I like I saw so many different types of cultures. I saw many different types of people and to me it actually love that. I love meeting people of different backgrounds because I get to learn like different experiences through them, but I did feel kind of out of place seeing that I was one of the smaller numbers um compared to the other large groups that are here. So, it was very different um seeing the kind of people I did meet and everything. Um but even then I still enjoyed meeting the type of people I know today.
- I:** Ok. And I um heard some people talk about um uhhhh with the with the school that they chose having you know some thoughts of transferring is there anyone else that maybe thought about transferring from their school or anyone that did transfer?
- P5:** Yes, I do have a plan to transfer in Chinese college for study abroad.
- P6:** I often think what it would be like to transfer, but then I am reminded that the program I'm in will open so many doors for me in the future. So, no, I don't think I will transfer from my current institution.

(Quiet)

- I:** Ok. So the next question is when considering your peers how would you rank your college meaning would you rank your college as you know a highly selective college that you know requires a high GPA, high SAT, high ACT or would you um, rank it as a moderately selective where the GPA is not quite as high or that scores are not as high or a less selective where the scores are not high um as far as the admission process goes.
- P3:** Um. Well, this is Angela again. Um I would I would Classimy classify my school as highly selective, but um it really depends like which group of friends were comparing it to cause I did go to a magnet high school and so a group of people were pretty competitive and then the other half were you know they weren't as competitive and so I would put myself in the middle but its not like the most selective thing in the world. So, yeah.
- P6:** Less Selective because I have many friends that think that getting a "C" in a class is okay, and they don't strive to get an "A." However, there are many students that are motivated to do well. I think that selectivity really doesn't affect the type of students one finds at a specific university. There will always be slackers and high achievers, regardless of how selective the pool of students is.
- I:** Ok.
- P2:** This is Veronica again uh, I would consider mine very selective uh because even though I had a high GPA and I had the ACT scores I still had to do the summer program where it was you had to take it if you wanted whether you wanna go in. Um and I think I had to pass we took math and we took chemistry. We both had to pass those classes with a B and if you didn't pass you weren't allowed you weren't admitted to the school.
- P1:** This is Israel speaking and if I were to consider my peers from high school I would say mine was a bit more selective just because of the fact that it was a UC uh cuz most people in my community um. It is a bit more difficult for them who try to go to a UC um and so because the GPA's were much more higher, the test scores and everything that was involved with it. And so, um compared to them I would say my school was a bit more selective even though again there are more schools that's even more selective than UCR.
- P5:** I would say my school is Less selective. I did not have chances to know many information about my college. I also did not take a field trip to University of Oregon during high school.
- P7:** I would say my school is moderately selective, it appears to me that a very high percentage of my peers are excited to be at school and have a passion for learning

as opposed to less selective schools where students may be attending solely to appease their parents as opposed to achieving personal and professional growth.

- I:** Ok. So, now that you uh you all have I know that you're in different places as far as um you're your um basically your I don't know the word I'm looking for, but basically your progress in the Gates program. Um, but now that you have the scholarship um basically I wanted to ask what is your understanding of the Gates Millennium Scholars program or the scholarship in general at this point?
- P7:** To my understanding, it is a group of scholars not unlike myself who have a desire to learn, grow, and achieve. We are a family and a support group of students that have overcome adversity to continue on the path of success.
- P4:** Um, this is Daniel. Um, my understanding, well the Gates um Millennium Scholarship it has help me a lot uh as far as networking as far as us growing professionally um, and its just ah ah ah the Gates Millennium Scholarship is more than a scholarship it offers like as I said opportunities to grow professionally, to network, and every time um that I had to make a decision as far as what internship to um to select I would always call some body from the Gates Millennium Scholars program and they would help me um every time I had a question about what to do and what not to do they would help me and through my involvement with the Gates Millennium Scholars program that they have um that I mentioned earlier I've had an opportunity of meeting people from so many different places and one of um is um several of them are actually my mentors so I always stay in touch with. I'm always sending them my resume, my cover letter so that they can help me and critique them and just to and how to they they've taught me how to write a professional email and stuff like that so that they the Gates Millennium Scholarship is more than a scholarship. It's an opportunity to grow as a leader and a as a professional and how to get involved in your school and stuff like that.
- I:** Ok. Any body else want to share their you know take on what the scholarship actually you know means?
- P2:** Um, What Daniel, like Daniel was saying, it's more than a scholarship. Its not like, they give you the money and like here ya go just um you know what do what do we want to do with it. There are um they're more willing to help you than take it away from you. So like in case you fall you do fall short on GPA they're not going to take your scholarship from you right away because they're going to see what they can do to maybe help you academically or maybe you're struggling with other aspects in life before they take it away.
- P3:** Um, well, I'm pretty new to the program. Well, ok. And so I just got it last year. Um. I feel like the program really wants to foster the growth of like the STEM fields primarily with um minority students and I think that's really important and I

was pretty surprised that I actually got it cause I didn't list my initial major as a stem subject. I actually put Psychology and so um so I think I'm kinda like an outsider in that aspect, but I definitely think there's like a very heavy focus on raising like the stem population which I think is important. So, yeah.

P5: I went to know Gates Millennium Scholars program in summer before my junior year. I was told that GMS is a really big scholarship giving student's full ride to any college in the United States. However, students having a really small chances.

P6: From what I've come to understand, the Gates Millennium Scholars Program is much more than just a scholarship program. They provide peer mentoring and ambassador opportunities. Really, it's like a family of minority scholarship recipients from various years. The GMS program covers 10 years of tuition to any institution located within the United States. Most importantly, however, the GMS program rewards individuals with the drive to succeed and engender change in their local, national, and international communities.

I: Ok. So, I know that um you a lot of you said that um that you were notified about receiving the scholarship in A- April. Is that pretty consistent with everyone's experience or did anyone else get notified maybe earlier or later?

P6: I was notified in late April on a Saturday on my way home from the Mexican Buffett. The news only enhanced the joyous day I was already having. I remember I got the mail out from our P.O. box. It wasn't until I opened the large envelope in the car that I started crying. I remember I was in shock for about two weeks. I still didn't know how to approach my new situation. I didn't realize the magnitude of the award until I realized that I could actually attend the colleges that, for a long time, I had already ruled out because I could not afford them. It was a great experience.

P7: I was notified through the mail around late March or early April of 2015.

(Quiet)

I: Ok, so everybody pretty much got their notifications around April time. Ok. So, so, the next question.

P4: Yeah, on March first though is when I learned that I was a finalist. Um, and then um it was mid April is when I learned that I was a Gates scholar.

I: The next question is about advisement and I know that we talked a little bit about you know what advisement looks like through the Gates Millennium Scholarship program before you get the scholarship, by um did any body did anybody what is

the difference between your level of advisement before you became a Gates Scholar and what's the level of advisement you receive now. What does look like?

- P6:** The level of advisement dramatically increased after receiving this scholarship. It was as if everyone suddenly wanted to play a part in deciding my future. It was exhausting. I remember I couldn't have a conversation with someone without them mentioning my college decision or the scholarship at least twice. I felt like everyone knew what I should do when I didn't. Slowly but surely, I felt myself being swayed by everyone's advice, and that's when I realized I had had enough. I had to make a decision, and I had to make it on my own.
- P4:** Um, before I got the Gates Millennium Scholarship um when I submitted the application on January 11th I think it was um the day that it was due um they told me that early March um they were going to get back to me about if I was a finalist. In early March they got back to me. And then they told me uh when I submitted the documents they said that mid April they were going to get back to me if I was a Gates scholar and they got back to me in mid April. So, they were very on point as far as when they said they were going to modify the students and then after the um being a Gates scholar every time that there's something that needs to go out um, I always get an um an email first and then I uh I get it the modifications through the mail, but I'm always getting um emails from the Gates Millennium Scholars program about programs about what things to get involved with especially because I also created an account at uh as a GMS mentoring which is also very very helpful. So, I'm always getting modifications about programs through out the Gates.
- I:** Ok. Did your school, and this is for everyone, before you basically started at your school did you receive any type of advisement um I guess in the I don't know if it was the summer as far as in the interim before you actually started at your college did you receive any type of advisement from your school?
- P2:** Um, this is Veronica and before school started it was during the semester so, um. At the school I go to you you are have to take a kind of like a Freshman Seminar class. And it's just a little bit too dry. It's different for each class. Because I know like for us they tailored they tailor our class for first generation students. So we had like a lot of conversations about privilege, about um culture, and stuff like that. And, its just its in another class its more like ok time management, uh um selecting a career things like that so um that I guess that's the way the school has been helping me decide on what path I want to take.
- I:** Ok. So, um this kind of goes back with uh, its kind of tied in with this question and it kind of goes back up to the questions that we talked about previously, but um when you were selecting a college or university did your high school offer any type of advisement to help you pick you know kind of figure out what college is gonna be the best fit for you for you so that you wont end up at a school that wont be a good fit for you? Did any body's high school do anything like that?

(Two people talking)

P3: Um, well my high school had an annual college. Sorry if you wanted to speak, but.

P1: It's fine, you go ahead.

P3: My high school. Oh thanks. Well, my high school had college fairs which were really helpful and I think a lot of people just to get that exposure to you know get that exposure to colleges that they wouldn't have been able to visit cause a lot of schools you know are pretty far. You really don't want to take a trip when you have you know classes to take. Um, and so speaking to the representatives for the schools were really, really helpful cause you get a sense of what the culture is like. And they do give you those you know pamphlets that are pretty generic but they are helpful like the generic information is helpful so um. I would say like the kind of exposure we got through um college fairs was the most helpful.

P1: Uh, during my high school. This is Israel speaking. During my high school I was also a part of like the outer program so uh there were some times when we had to do research projects and well we had to research a specific college or we also made field trips on nearby colleges, but in reality the best advisement I actually got as far as choosing what college I should go to pick um was from one specific teacher who told me when he was younger if he had the choice between UC and Cal State he would have gone to the UC one because um because it was better for him and so when he like told me to think the same way for me I took his advice and ended up choosing the UC over all the Cal states one because if he had had the same choice he would have done that. And so I took that from him as well.

I: Ok. Ok. So it sounds. I hear you know pretty much you know a lot of people saying you know you had this some type of advisement in high school whether it be through your community or having teachers that were you know kind of supportive and then also you know family played a really big role um in you know helping you select a college. Did anyone not have that experience where maybe they didn't have any type of advisement when they were selecting a college or university?

(Quiet)

I: Ok, did anyone use um any form of social media or interaction with current or former students when they were selecting a college?

(Quiet)

I: Ok. So, the last two questions I have um are about your basically about your feedback and um basically your opinion of the scholarship now I know that a lot of

schools are starting to basically cater towards Gates Millennium Scholars. A lot of schools are trying to you know focus and hone in on those scholars, attract them to their institution. And did any body have that kind of experience where maybe they were given you know maybe your school found out you were a Gates Millennium Scholar and maybe they gave you um you know some type of yeah I don't know what I want to say preferential choice or standing at the school. But, did any of you receive any type of special treatment when you when your school found out you were a Gates Millennium scholar?

(Quiet)

I: Ok. So, the next question is, in your opinion how easy was the transition into the Gates Millennium scholars. So, once you got once you got your scholarship how easy of a transition was it into you know take you know between going to your college and then going to the Gates Millennium Freshman conference, how was that transition?

P1: Uh, this is Israel speaking. Um, actually when I first began like the few weeks of college and everything there was a point in time when I did kind of like freak out myself a lot because I thought so much of the future and so much of like the work and everything and the stress of everything to the point as where I got I felt like I added like a few panic attacks, but like I'm better now. But it was after the conference that I started learning more about the other Freshman and I started learning about past scholars and what their paths were like and how some of them um actually ended up failing sometimes their first quarter or semester, but still ended up having their Masters, their Bachelors, their Doctorals. And just hearing from like the past experiences of others and then seeing that it is a struggle like its something that were all going to phase like no matter like its college. It's difficult no matter like where you end up. Uh, after like listening to them from other peers I felt much more at ease knowing that that were other people out there that felt the same experiences I did. So, it was very relieving afterwards when I heard um others speak about that um, so it made me feel a lot better about my situation and it made me like want to work even harder so that I could I know where I belong and I know what kind of person I need to be part of the Gates Millennium Scholarship.

P5: I can tell that it is the valuable experience. During applying this scholarship, that was actually a hard time to me actually. I dealt with writing 8 essays in the most clearly way that can hook GMS committee. Even after I won this scholarship, I still need to make sure to maintain the high GPA and keep joining community services to be worth being a Gates Scholar. During the transition into GMS program, I actually felt very comfortable to join with many leaders, alumni and other scholars in Gates Millennium Scholarship program. I have been inspired a lot by their achievement and what they did for community. As now, I totally feel thankful for all GMS support and opportunities.

I: Ok. Awesome. Anybody else want to share how their transition was into the Gates Millennium Scholars program from high school?

P4: Um, I remember when I attended um my um Freshman conference. Um they they um the staff the Gates Millennium Scholars staff they had told uh all the new Freshman class to to let not to let not this be the last time that they see us. They said that a lot of times um people who don't really know about too much about the Gates Millennium Scholarship they don't really participate in the programs and it it will be like the last thing that they do as Gates Millennium Scholars. So, that really motivated me to look into all the programs that they had and to really network within the staff that way um every time there was an event that tha that um GMS posted I knew about it and so that I can apply for it. Um, and um like Israel said, um learning from other people and the mistakes that they made and uh really just motivated me to always ask questions and to always speak up and um definitely get involved.

I: Ok. Anyone else want to share their transition?

P6: I'd say it was pretty easy, but not the part in which we had to apply. Everyone is welcoming and excited. It's a vibrant atmosphere that can really motivate someone to keep doing their best and to keep striving to attain the unattainable. The conferences they hold are great.

(Quiet)

I: Ok, so the last question, I know that we are a little bit past time, but um um were going to wrap up with this last question. Um and it just says if you could provide any feedback to the Gates Millennium Foundation regarding how you selected a college or university what would that advice or what would that feedback sound like?

(Quiet)

I: Or um, let me restate the question. So, basically um what I'm asking is if you could provide any feedback to Gates about you know how scholars actually select a college would you give them any feedback for you know on the timing of when they notified people about the scholarship or would they would you um advise them about having some type of you know support to help scholars select a college or would you provide any or would you keep the program as is?

P4: To be perfectly honest, I don't think that um there's anyway that they can um speed up the process um because every year there's like the year that I um um um applied 24,000 students across the country had applied and then the following year over 50,000 students had applied also the class of 2013. So, they receive a lot of

applicants. So um, I don't now if I would like the rush thing, but um I mean I have no problem um um with the Gates program and a lot of students that I've helped apply for the Gates they said that they didn't have a problem either, but um um I don't think I'd change anything.

I: Ok. Anybody else have an.

P2: Um, this is Veronica again I think if they can um announce the scholarship recipients a little bit earlier because for I the I was notified like late April. I remember there was a couple of like a week before the deadline for accepting um my college and I couldn't accept it because if I did I uh had to I think I had to pay like \$200 just to reserve my spot and I was in the case like what if I don't get in. What if I don't get a scholarship and I just spent \$200 right there?

P6: I would say to minimize the pressure that is put on the students when selecting a university to attend. Let them choose where they want to go. Listen to them, their wants, and their needs, and help them by providing unbiased advice.

I: Ok. Ok. Any body else want to provide any type of feedback or closing remarks?

P5: I would probably say something like: Dear future GMS Scholars, if you luckily win this scholarship, it is not necessary to bet your future with going for a career that make you earn a lot of money, and then choosing the very expensive or famous college. Do not be influenced by your parents' expectation. It is important to hear your own voice and career aspiration of what you actually want to do and become in the future in order to choose the right college.

P7: The college selection process can be very overwhelming considering that it is the beginning of a very drastic change in one's life. With all the pressure placed on the student by their peers, family and mentors, the best decision the student can make is definitely the one they feel will make them most happy in the long term, as it is their time, energy and passion that they will be pouring into the first four years of their post high-school education, not anyone else's.

P1: For the most part yeah, most of everything Gates has its very hard for them to give you even more additional feedback I mean help to the Gates Scholars or the ones who are applying and everything, but if we were to like stay focus to the even broader or the bigger um general of students uh public of students if they had some kind of uh I don't know like workshops that like using statistics from Gates scholars or using their own um like eye witness accounts like of the people who have done the same thing like of how to choose a college of like how their process was and like give that to the general public like through either brochures or a sort of workshops then maybe that could give some people like some inside help like how they how they chose a college so that they could help the people who are upcoming

seniors who are about to graduate and choose a college themselves and you know see if that could help um actually um getting enough information I would say the best possible way would be through emails or some form of electronic um method cause like trying to host like a workshop at the different high schools that would be kind of complicated. So, (I: Uh huh) that would be like one of the most not the easiest but the most efficient way they could possibly hand out that kind of information.

I: Ok. Ok. Well, thank you all so much for sharing your experience and your feedback and uh just a little bit more about your college selection process I definitely appreciate each and every one of you for taking the time out of your schedule to you know help me get the data and definitely write something up that will you know worth while and that can possibly help the Gates Millennium program and as we move into this next chapter with um possibly having a new program and kind of phasing out the program that we currently have. Alright, so thank you again for participating and everyone have a great night and um I'll definitely be in touch with you all.

P1: Ok.

P2: Thank you so much.

P4: Alright, thank you.

P1: Take care every body.

P3: Good night.

I: Ok.

P4: Thank you. Happy New Year.

I: You too!

APPENDIX H

Represented Colleges and Universities

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. University of Wisconsin River Falls | 36. University of Florida |
| 2. University of Miami | 37. University of California, Riverside |
| 3. New York University | 38. University of Portland |
| 4. Yale University | 39. University of Missouri |
| 5. Carleton College | 40. University of California, Irvine |
| 6. Emory University | 41. University of North Texas |
| 7. University of Texas at Austin | 42. Amherst College |
| 8. Massachusetts Institute of Technology | 43. Gonzaga University |
| 9. Columbia University | 44. Colorado State |
| 10. Virginia Tech | 45. Drexel |
| 11. University of Michigan | 46. Indiana University |
| 12. Johns Hopkins University | 47. Georgia State University |
| 13. Barnard College | 48. Brown University |
| 14. West Texas A&M University | 49. Willamette University |
| 15. University of Central Oklahoma | 50. Texas State University |
| 16. Spelman College | 51. Christopher Newport University |
| 17. Northeastern State University | 52. University of Alabama |
| 18. George Fox University | 53. University of Texas at El Paso |
| 19. University of Washington | 54. Northern Arizona University |
| 20. University of Utah | 55. University of Southern California |
| 21. University of California, Davis | 56. Morehouse College |
| 22. Tougaloo College | 57. Cornell University |
| 23. University of Georgia | 58. Northwestern University |
| 24. Worcester Polytechnic Institute | 59. Oregon University |
| 25. High Point University | 60. Princeton University |
| 26. Mercer University | 61. University of California, San Diego |
| 27. Providence College | 62. University of South Florida |
| 28. Pomona College | 63. Colorado School of Mines |
| 29. California Polytechnic State University | 64. Kent State University |
| 30. University of California, Berkeley | 65. Oberlin College |
| 31. University of California, Los Angeles | 66. Stevenson University |
| 32. Northern State University | 67. University of Rochester |
| 33. University of Wyoming | 68. University of the Incarnate Word |
| 34. Fordham University | 69. Long Island University |
| 35. Florida Atlantic University | 70. George Washington University |

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